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*The Agaw Languages*

by

Robert Hetzron



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**THE AGAW LANGUAGES \*****Robert Hetzron****University of California  
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A short presentation of the speakers of Agaw and a critical survey of the linguistic literature on this group of Cushitic languages are followed by a concise comparative-descriptive grammar, summing up what is known about these languages at present, with occasional historical reconstructions.

**CONTENTS**

	page
CONTENTS . . . . .	1
1. NOMENCLATURE . . . . .	2
1.1. Agaw . . . . .	2
1.2. Bilin . . . . .	3
1.3. <i>k/x-V-m</i> . . . . .	4
1.4. Quara/Falasha . . . . .	4
1.5. Awiya-Damot = Awngi . . . . .	4
2. THE AGAW LANGUAGES . . . . .	5
3. STUDIES ON AGAW . . . . .	5
4. A SKETCH OF AGAW . . . . .	10
4.0. Introduction . . . . .	10
4.0.1. Sources . . . . .	10
4.0.2. The branches of Agaw . . . . .	10
4.1. Phonology . . . . .	11
4.1.1. Consonants . . . . .	11
4.1.2. Vowels . . . . .	11
4.1.3. Prosody . . . . .	12
4.1.4. Some morphophonemic alternations . . . . .	12
4.1.4.1. Bilin consonant mutation . . . . .	12
4.1.4.2. Awngi devoicing . . . . .	13
4.1.4.3. Awngi assimilation of vocalic height . . . . .	13
4.1.4.4. Bilin vowel harmony . . . . .	14
4.2. Morphology . . . . .	14
4.2.1. Nouns . . . . .	14
4.2.1.1. Gender and number . . . . .	14
4.2.1.2. Case . . . . .	16

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\*I am very grateful to Dr. H.-J. Sasse for generously supplying his unpublished data on Kemant. Dr. M. Saltarelli also sent me some unpublished material. Drs. M.L. Bender and A. Zaborski read a draft of the manuscript and proposed some changes. I am indebted to them.

4.2.1.2.1.	Sentence-case . . . . .	16
4.2.1.2.2.	Genitive . . . . .	18
4.2.1.2.2.1.	Non-agreeing genitive . . . . .	18
4.2.1.2.2.2.	Agreeing genitive . . . . .	19
4.2.1.3.	Adjectives . . . . .	19
4.2.2.	Pronouns . . . . .	19
4.2.2.1.	Personal pronouns . . . . .	19
4.2.2.2.	Demonstrative pronouns . . . . .	21
4.2.3.	Verbs . . . . .	21
4.2.3.1.	Person, gender and number-marking . . . . .	21
4.2.3.1.1.	Prefix-conjugation . . . . .	21
4.2.3.1.2.	Suffix-conjugations . . . . .	22
4.2.3.1.2.1.	Some verb-classes . . . . .	24
4.2.3.1.2.2.	Some suffixes . . . . .	24
4.2.3.1.2.3.	The element $k^w/x^w/\gamma^w$ . . . . .	24
4.2.3.2.	Tenses, moods, aspects (in main verbs) . . . . .	27
4.2.3.3.	Subordinate verbs . . . . .	28
4.2.3.3.1.	Converb . . . . .	28
4.2.3.3.2.	Miscellaneous subordinate forms . . . . .	29
4.2.3.3.3.	The relative . . . . .	29
4.2.3.4.	Negation . . . . .	30
4.2.3.5.	Deverbative derivation . . . . .	31
4.2.3.5.1.	Verbs . . . . .	31
4.2.3.5.2.	Nominals . . . . .	32
4.2.3.6.	Special verbs . . . . .	32
4.3.	Syntax . . . . .	34
4.3.1.	Word order . . . . .	34
4.3.1.1.	Simple sentences . . . . .	34
4.3.1.2.	Compound sentences . . . . .	35
4.3.1.3.	Order of qualifiers . . . . .	36
4.3.2.	Agreement . . . . .	36
4.3.2.1.	Gender and number agreement . . . . .	36
4.3.2.2.	Case in qualifier-qualified constructions . . . . .	37
4.3.2.3.	The function of the headnoun in the relative clause . . . . .	38
4.3.3.	Emphasis . . . . .	38
4.3.4.	Question . . . . .	38
4.3.4.1.	Sentence-question . . . . .	38
4.3.4.2.	Pronominal questions . . . . .	39
4.3.5.	Particles . . . . .	39
REFERENCES	. . . . .	40

## 1. NOMENCLATURE

'Agaw' is the term used for a number of closely related Cushitic languages. In current classifications, Agaw is represented as the only member of, thus identical with, the Central Cushitic group.

### 1.1 Agaw

This is the general term used for the whole group, borrowed from Amharic *agäw*. In the literature, it has also been spelled Agau, (French *agaou*), Agow, Agew. It corresponds to the self-designation of the South-Western group of Agaws (speakers of Kunfäl and Awngi), the others call

themselves by the names listed below.<sup>1</sup> The modern Awngi version of this name is *awī*, but in the last century Beke (1845:40) still transcribed *Aghaghā* (*gh=γ*) for 'Agaw-land', today *awāyo* with the ending *-yo* 'house, home'.<sup>2</sup> It is thus reasonable to reconstruct *aγ<sup>w</sup>ī* or older *ag<sup>w</sup>ī*, which would explain the Amharic form with a velar and a labial: *agāw*. The earliest occurrence of this name is from 525 AD by the Greek traveller Cosmas (see Conti Rossini 1904:183, fn.1). The 11th century dynasty of Ethiopian rulers of Agaw descent (from Lasta) is known under the name of *zag<sup>w</sup>e*, analysable into *zā-* North-Ethiopic 'of' + *ag<sup>w</sup>e* 'Agaw', used in the area where 'Agaw' would no more be a self-designation today.

It may be hazardous to propose an etymology for this name. Bruce's *ag-oha* 'shepherds of the river' (fn. 2) was rightly rejected by Beke (1845:90-1) and Beinisch (1884, I:5). Let me only list a few words of Awngi that bear a reasonable phonetic resemblance: *aγ-* 'to be', *aqī* 'man', *āq-* 'to know'.<sup>3</sup>

## 1.2. Bilin

Also spelled Bilen, also known as Bogos. The etymology of *bilin* (self-designation *bālin*, Tigrinya *bālen*) is unknown. According to Reinisch (1882:9), *bogos* is a Tigre word meaning 'warrior, conqueror'. The Bilin or Northern Agaw are divided into two main groups: *Bet Taq<sup>w</sup>e*<sup>4</sup> and *Bet Tarqe*. *Bet* is Semitic for 'house'. *Taq<sup>w</sup>e*, more exactly *Ta<sup>w</sup>aq<sup>w</sup>e*, and *Tarqe* sound quite similar. It may be that originally these two words were isoglosses distinguishing the two groups.<sup>5</sup> What could then their meanings be?<sup>6</sup>

Of all the Agaw idioms, only Awngi, and possibly Xamta, have a prefix-based verbal conjugation (4.2.3.1.1.), the rest use suffixes only (4.2.3.1.2.). Yet most scholars agree that the prefix-conjugations are archaic and must have disappeared in most instances. Now, in Awngi *tāqē* means 'you (sg.) know'. Since 'Do you know Agaw?' is the most natural conversation-opener, the expression for 'you know' could be a very convenient isogloss for practical distinction. Thus, *ta<sup>w</sup>aq<sup>w</sup>e* may just be a very old form for 'you know', still prefix-conjugated, possibly used in the group called *Bet Taq<sup>w</sup>e*. What could then explain the *t* in *tarqe*? Very interestingly, while *aq/ax* is the pan-Agaw root for 'know', Xamir, the closest relative of Bilin, uses the root *areq*.<sup>7</sup> *Bet Tarqe* is the southern group and is thus geographically closer to Xamir. In this light, it is quite probable that their ancient expression for 'you know' was *tarqe*, with a prefixal *t-*. Modern Bilin has *ar?*- for 'know' (*q → ?*).

<sup>1</sup>A term for 'Agaw' referring to their relatives or to their ancestral group, is found also in the other languages: Bilin *agāu* (Reinisch 1887:20), Xamta *agāu* or *agō*, Kemant *agawwā*.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. also Bruce's *Agohā* which Beke (ibid.) rightly attributes to the imperfect transcription of the *γ* sound by Bruce's scribes.

<sup>3</sup>The latter two may be related, cf. *homo sapiens*. Amharic has *awaqī*, literally 'knower' for 'adult'.

<sup>4</sup>Reinisch (1887:345) suggested that *Takue* was a mistaken notation by W. Munzinger for *ṭa<sup>w</sup>ā-qūr* 'sons of Ta<sup>w</sup>a', but Conti Rossini (1907:332) also gives *ṭa<sup>w</sup>aqūē* which corroborates the final *-e*.

<sup>5</sup>Like the Muxār distinguish between an *anā-bet* and an *ādi-bet* according to the pronoun 'I' the speakers of the dialects respectively use.

<sup>6</sup>Naturally, there is a tradition claiming that the ancestor of the tribe was called *Taq<sup>w</sup>e*.

<sup>7</sup>Probably etymologically related to a verb 'observe, see' found in Galla and Somali. Cf. Saho *īdīg* 'know'.

1.3. *k/x-V-m*

There are several self-designations containing this syllable: the XAMTA (of Abergelle), the XAMIR (of Lasta and Wag) and the KEMANT. This root was tentatively explained by Reinisch (1884, I:5, fn. 4) as coming from *kām* 'possession, wealth, cattle', i.e. 'cattle-owners' or 'cattle-raisers' (cf. Conti Rossini 1912:21, fn. 1). The correspondence *t ~ k* for the first two is quite regular (4.0.2.),—this may be an old collective-feminine ending. *-ant* is the active participle suffix (4.2.3.5.2.).<sup>8</sup>

Bruce's Tcheratz-Agaw (*čirača-agāw* in Bruce MS) is the same as Xamir, more specifically the dialect of Wag (cf. Salt 1814:351, Beke 1849:269). There has been some confusion regarding the use of the terms "Xamta" and "Xamir." Bender (1971:226) employs the term "Xamta" for what is known as Xamir. Beke (1849:269) already recognized that *Xamtiŋa* is the same as his *Hhāmara* and d'Abbadie (1841:390) signalled that the speakers of Lasta Agaw call their country *Hamra* or *Hamta* and their language *hamtoŋga*. Here we shall continue to use the name "Xamir" for the dialect of Lasta and Wag, and reserve "Xamta" for the Agaw of Abergelle.

1.4. *Quara/Falasha*

The two terms refer to the same Judaizing people. "Quara" is *h<sup>a</sup>ara* in Agaw (Tubiana 1957:204, fn. 1) which weakens Aläqa Tayyā's etymology for this name: *k<sup>a</sup>ara* 'sun' (1914 E.E.:38).<sup>9</sup> "Falasha" (*fälaša*) has been explained as coming from the Ge'ez word *fälasyan* 'emigrants', referring to the alleged Canaanite origin of this people. Though the phonetic correspondence *fälaša/fälasi* (sg.) is satisfactory, one cannot help noticing the similarity *h<sup>a</sup>ar ~ fal*.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the Ge'ez etymology may just be another instance of popular etymology. Note further that the language of the Quara is *h<sup>a</sup>arasa* with the ending *-sa* (Reinisch 1885, I:106-7), which makes the resemblance with *fälaša* even more striking. The Falasha are also known under the name Kayla (derogatory according to Bender 1971:220), though for some authors the Kayla are a separate branch of Falashas. D'Abbadie explained the term as meaning 'he does not cross' (Conti Rossini 1912:23, fn. 1), since they do not cross rivers on the Sabbath.

1.5. *Awīya-Damot = Awngi*

"Awīya" is as gross a misnomer as calling the language of this survey "Englishman". The term *awīya* means in Awngi 'male Agaw person', literally 'son of Agaw'. "Damot" is the name of a province where Agaw used to be spoken. In Hetzron 1969, I introduced the obvious name "Southern Agaw" for both (since they are not distinct entities). Following the preference recently displayed by several authors, the term "Awngi" (for *awŋi* 'Agaw language' from *aw(ŋ)* 'Agaw' + *-ŋi* the suffix used for names of languages) is used below, though the term "Southern Agaw" is still retained for the speakers.

<sup>8</sup>The popular etymology of Kemant is Ge'ez *kāmā antä* 'like you', the answer supposedly given by the secretive Kemants when asked by others: 'Of what religion you are?' (Conti Rossini, 1912:21). Note that in Amharic their name is Qamant, with an initial emphatic consonant, not with *k-*, which invalidates this etymology. Another popular etymology by Falashas, even more improbable, is mentioned by Conti Rossini (1912:21, fn. 1): the Agaw expression *kāmāgau-toku* 'he returned without profit', a sarcastic characterization of the Kemant religion by the Falasha.

<sup>9</sup>It is a remarkable coincidence that the Awngi word for 'Agaw': *awī*, also displays similarity with the word 'sun': *awā*, cf. Saltarelli MS. However, the reconstruction of the older form of *awī* as *ay<sup>a</sup>i* seems to me more convincing.

<sup>10</sup>Xamir has one example that may be an instance of *h<sup>a</sup> ~ f* alternation: *ieferā* and *x<sup>a</sup>ar*, both meaning 'child'. Reinisch (1884, II.18[332]) suggested that *ieferā* contains the singulative ending *-ra* (see 4.2.1. below), but such an ending should disappear in the plural, and 'children' is *ieŋirt* with the *r*, cf. *gāwetṛā* 'coward', with the singulative *-ra*, plural: *gawīt*. The short vocative form *iefā* should then be the result of an abbreviation.

## 2. THE AGAW LANGUAGES

A short survey of the Agaw languages is found in Conti Rossini 1912 (25-34). The geographic distribution of the Agaw was summed up by J. Tubiana (1957). It is more than probable that they originally constituted a territorial continuum, broken up mainly by the Semitization of the population, and also by migrations. Beke (1845:91) considers them "the representatives of the original inhabitants of Abyssinia." The northernmost group, Bilin, may not be autochthonous, but reached its present habitat through migration from the South, from the Lasta region. This is Reinisch's conclusion (1882:9) based on the great similarity between Bilin and Xamir. Conti Rossini (1912:26) estimated their migration to have taken place at the turn of the 10th-11th centuries. Yet it is possible that Northern Ethiopia had also been inhabited by some branches of Agaw that disappeared (got assimilated) after the Semitic immigration, witness the traces of Agaw influence on the oldest documented Ethiopian Semitic language: Ge'ez (see Hetzron *in prep.*). Among the Southern Agaw there is also an oral tradition about their having come from Soqota (Lasta), but such a claim is not substantiated by linguistic facts (cf. Conti Rossini 1905:122[20]).

Slightly modifying Conti Rossini's division (1912:25-6), Tubiana recognizes four major GEOGRAPHIC groups, with a question-marked fifth. This is not a genetic classification of the various Agaw languages (see 4.0.2. below). The estimates for number of speakers are taken from Bender 1971.

A. NORTHERN AGAW, the Bilin in Western Eritrea, in the region of Keren. The speakers, at least 32,000, are all Tigre-Agaw bilinguals. The northern subgroup is called *Bet Taqwe* or *Halhal*, and the southern one *Bet Tarqe* or *Bogos* (see 1.2. above and Conti Rossini 1907:332ff).

B. EASTERN AGAW, with Xamta of Abergelle, Northern Xamir of Wag and Southern Xamir of Soqota (Lasta). They are also bilinguals, also speaking Tigrinya (Xamta) and Amharic (Xamir). There may be 5,000 speakers altogether, but it is not certain that there are any Xamta speakers left today.

C. SOUTHERN AGAW spoken in the province of Agawmädär and Mätäkkäl, and recently extinct in the province of Damot. It comprises about 50,000 speakers, but it is rapidly yielding to Amharic, especially along the Debre-Marqos - Bahr Dar highway. The language has been mis-called Awiya, unnecessarily distinguished from the Agaw of Damot. In the present study, it is called Awngi.

D. WESTERN AGAW, with Quara, the original language of the Judaizing Falasha (today most, if not all, of them speak Amharic), and with Kemant, spoken by at least 17,000 people. The Kumfäl, who live in the lowlands south of Quara (Simoons 1960:22, 43-5; Cowley 1971), geographically also belong here, but linguistically they are closer to Awngi.

E. SEMIEN. Tubiana (1957:299-301) and Simoons (1960:22, 42-3) report the existence of Agaw in this region, in Sahalla, but no research has been done on this group. Simoons considers them "simply an extension into the Northwest of a larger Agaw group which is centered in the provinces to the east."

What makes Agaw important beyond the interest one ought to have in any human language is that it most probably constitutes the most significant substratum of the Ethiopian Semitic languages (Hetzron, *in prep.*).

## 3. STUDIES ON AGAW

In this section, I am listing only LINGUISTIC studies in Agaw, though some of the works mentioned also contain historical information.

Probably the first European to speak Agaw (namely Awngi) was the Italian missionary Fr. A. de ANGELIS (†1622, see Conti Rossini 1912:32). The first attestation of an Agaw word is in LUDOLPH 1681, I.15: *y-guyā* 'my lord'.

The oldest documents of Agaw are the still unpublished translations of the Songs of Solomon, commissioned by the Scottish traveller JAMES BRUCE around 1770 (Bruce MS). He had the text translated from Ge'ez to Amharic, and from Amharic to Gafat (the only version this far published), Galla, and three Agaw tongues: Fālasha, Damot-Agāw (Awngi) and Čirača (Tcheratz = Northern Xamir). The selection of this specific poetic text with major philological difficulties was quite infelicitous. I have read only the Damot-Agāw text, but I can report that this version is very poor indeed. The translator rendered word by word, with complete disregard for Agaw syntax, and seemingly did not understand many passages. Bruce also collected a comparative vocabulary of 192 words in these languages.

The Appendix of SALT 1814 contains word lists of various Ethiopian languages. One of them is Agaw, namely Xamir. BEKE 1845 contains vocabularies of 13 languages. The first three are Agaw: Xamir (Hhāmara or Agau of Wāag), Falasha and Awngi (Agāwi or Agau of Agaumīder). Beke 1849 is a presentation of the Ethiopian languages including Agaw, as a supplement to a "Report on the Languages of Africa made by Dr. Latham to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, at the Meeting at Oxford in 1847." He coordinates his presentation with those of A. d'Abbadie and J. Bruce. SAPETO 1857 includes a vocabulary of Bilin (Bogos) in its Appendix. I was unable to locate FLAD 1866 which is reported to contain "an outline of the elements and a vocabulary of the Falasha language."

WALDMEIER 1868 consists of a sixteen-page German-Awngi word list and nine pages of grammar: the conjugation of the verbs *inkaningi* (~*ɛnkanɛŋ*) 'love' and *kasingi* (~*kasɛŋ*) 'go', a list of prepositions, numerals, personal and demonstrative pronouns, and declension of nouns. Typically, he listed only four cases, Nom., Gen., Dat., and Acc., those found in German. Since the pronoun *ɛi* (his *engi*) means either 'he' or 'she', he did not notice the gender-distinction in Sg.3. verbs. His *ana* for 'she' is nothing but the feminine demonstrative pronoun 'that (one)'. His "passive" is in reality the Sg.3m. active verb with object suffixes. This was already pointed out by POTT in his detailed 1869 review of Waldmeier 1869. As a sequel to Pott's review article, PRAETORIUS (1869) offered observations of a comparative nature, establishing the "Hamitic" (i.e. Cushitic) nature of Agaw, mainly on the basis of Galla.

D'ABBADIE 1841 is a sketch of Xamir with structural comparison with Basque. D'Abbadie 1872 is another attempt at establishing the existence of Cushitic as a group. He called it "the languages of Kam" on the basis of the name of the language he studied first: Kamtiga,<sup>11</sup> composed of *kam* + *tiga* 'tongue'. His sixteen typological criteria for classifying a language as Cushitic are very reasonable (e.g. special negative forms for verbs, use of causative and double causative, composite verbs, etc.).

Interested in the "Black Jews of Ethiopia," JOSEPH HALÉVY (1873) made an investigation of the language of the Falasha in Dembia. His publication contains an introduction to the Semitic languages of Ethiopia, a comparative table of words and phrases in Bilin and Falasha (mainly of Dembia, sometimes also Quara) showing the relationship between them, a grammatical sketch, some texts, and a note on the position of Agaw in the "large family of languages also comprising Egyptian, Berber, Hausa and Beja" [my translation, R.H.], i.e. Afroasiatic. Halévy's work is the first important descriptive piece on Agaw. Halévy 1911 contains Falasha prayers, mainly in Ge'ez, but some passages are in a language that looks like Agaw (it contains the word *adāra* 'Lord' and the case-ending *-li*), but could not be deciphered by the best specialist of Quara: Leo Reinisch (see his letter in Halévy 1911:219).

<sup>11</sup>D'Abbadie uses italics for special sounds. Thus, "kamtiga" can be considered an adequate transcription of *xamtīṭa*, the name of their language used by the Xamir.



CUST 1883 mentions Bilin (I.127-8) and Agau (all the other Agaw tongues, I.131-5) in his summary of the Modern Languages of Africa. He used only second-hand material, but managed to sum up the data available at that time efficiently. SCHWEINFURT 1893 lists plant-names in Ethiopian languages, including Bilin and Xamir.

The most important figure in Agaw studies is doubtless the Viennese scholar LEO REINISCH. Under his direction, the Gospel of St. Mark was translated first from Amharic to Bilin (St. Mark 1882), then from Bilin to Falasha (St. Mark 1885), both editions printed in Ethiopian characters.

Reinisch studied Bilin the most intensively. His *Bilīn-Sprache* (1882) contains a short historical introduction and a detailed grammar, followed by sample texts. It is based on his own fieldwork from 1876 on. In 1883 he published a volume of Bilin texts, and in 1887 a Bilin-German dictionary. In 1884, he came forward with his second description of an Agaw tongue: Xamir, also based on fieldwork. This description also contains extensive comparisons with Bilin. The first volume is a grammar, the second texts and a vocabulary (Xamir-German). The third major contribution of Reinisch to Agaw studies appeared in 1885 — Quara, partly based on second-hand material (texts in Ethiopian characters) and partly on direct personal research. The first volume is a grammar, the second one has the texts and a Quara-German vocabulary, and the third one a German-Quara word list.

In his 1909 book on personal pronouns and verb inflection in Hamito-Semitic (Afroasiatic), Reinisch used a great deal of Agaw material. Most of his reconstructions do not withstand modern criticism.

BERTIN (1885:72-6) described the Agaw pronominal system and compared it with Akkadian.

IN MEINHOF 1912, Beja and Somali represent Cushitic, but in the general introduction (1-30) Bilin and Xamir are well represented, drawn from Reinisch's publications.

The second important personality in Agaw linguistic research was C. CONTI ROSSINI. In 1904 he published a "note" on Xamta, and in 1905 one on Awngi. Both contain a historical and ethnological introduction, a grammatical sketch, and a vocabulary. His presentation of Xamta is quite superficial and fragmentary. His study of Awngi is more detailed, though still sketchy. His book on Kemant (1912) is better organized and more detailed. It is practically a comparative grammar of Agaw languages in which Kemant is only one of several. His Kemant material is based entirely on the notes of A. d'Abbadie. The volume contains a historical introduction, a general survey of the Agaw languages, followed by a grammar, some texts, and Kemant-French vocabulary with a French-Kemant word list. In 1907, he published texts in Bilin, some of them also translated into Amharic and Tigre.

In 1911, CAPOMAZZA published a text in Bilin dealing with historical traditions.

After Conti Rossini, research on Agaw seems to have stagnated for a long time. We find a respectable amount of Agaw material in PLAZIKOWSKY-BRAUNER'S publications on Cushitic, the Lasta (Southern Xamir), Falasha and Awngi material apparently collected by herself. In 1957 she dealt with auxiliary elements in Cushitic verbal conjugation, such as copulas and negative markers. Her 1958 article presents the determinative elements. Her 1959 article lists causative markers in Cushitic. The one published in 1960 analyzes numerals. She came back to the topic of verbal conjugations in a posthumously published article (1965). All the above articles deal with Cushitic as a whole, also involving various Agaw tongues. The data presented in them are interesting, often novel, but the historical reconstructions are rather naive.

Recently, two Ethiopian students under the direction of R.W. COWLEY (see his 1971) published ethnological and linguistic data on an Agaw group abusively called *Kunfāl* by their neighbors, in the south of Quara.

One of the problems with all the above studies is that they are pre-phonological. The lack of a rigorous, functionally based transcription may be less exasperating to the phonologist than to the morphologist-syntactician. I had personal fieldwork experience with Awngi only, but I can assert that the secondary researcher who would base his work exclusively on the data offered by Waldmeier and Conti Rossini would be more than once misled. It might sound frivolous to be supercilious with these pioneers of linguistic description pre-dating the great theoreticians who created a solid method of description. Yet even the relatively best authors like Reinisch and Conti Rossini lack internal consistency, both in transcription and grammatical description. Statements are often incomplete. Sometimes the grammar section and the grammatical notes in the vocabulary, or two paragraphs in the grammar are in contradiction. What is described as free variation is often an allomorphic distribution with strict distributional rules (as it appears in later studies, e.g. by Palmer vs. Reinisch for Bilin, or by Sasse vs. Conti Rossini for Kemant).

The first researcher of Agaw equipped with a solid knowledge of phonemics is JOSEPH TUBIANA, the author of the already quoted survey article from 1957. Tubiana 1948-51 mentions appellative suffixes in Kemant. His other publications on Agaw are mainly short etymological studies. Tubiana 1951-4 deals with deverbal noun derivation in Western Agaw. Tubiana 1958 is devoted to place-names and proposes Agaw etymologies for the two Ethiopian capital cities: Aksum and Gondar.<sup>12</sup> Tubiana 1959a explains the element following *mən* in the Amharic expression *məndən* or *məndər* 'what?' (referring only to a predicate) as a borrowing from Western Agaw *dara* 'thing'. Tubiana 1959b offers an Agaw etymology for the Ge'ez word *bāntāle* or *māntāle* 'hare'.<sup>13</sup> Tubiana 1970 describes the use of the Amharic particle *gən* 'but' and relates it to the Agaw copula *gān* (4.2.3.6.).

The real breakthrough in Agaw studies was brought about by the appearance of a series of articles by the noted linguist F.R. PALMER, based on his fieldwork in Eritrea. In 1957 he published a treatment of the verb in Bilin, followed by a study of the Bilin noun (1958). In 1959, the verbal morphology of another Agaw language: Awngi was the topic of an article by Palmer. He is the first one to provide solid, absolutely reliable data on Agaw. He is also to be credited with the discovery that Awngi is a tone language. These studies are characterized by the Firthian approach to language, where special emphasis is put on formal properties, patternings, groupings, oppositions of morphological exponents. Classification is often based on quantitative criteria such as "five member paradigms," "seven member paradigms." In order not to appear prejudicial, terms like "Aspect A" or "Aspect B" are used to replace the mnemonically preferable labels "Past" (or "Perfect"), "Present-Future" (or "Imperfect," "Nonpast"). The description is rigorous and reliable, but the primary picture it gives is a set of systems of formal exponents rather than a system of meaningful elements. Syntactic information concerning the use of the forms is often absent, even glosses are sparingly given and are left to the reader to figure out by himself. For this reason, his statements, though very precise, are often hard to decipher. Information about a given form may be scattered under headings like "prosodies" or "*n* member paradigms" with no summed up characterization, and syntactically related forms may not be listed together if one of them happens to have a "five member paradigm" and the other a "seven member paradigm." On the other hand, the reader who takes the trouble of working himself into them will find Palmer's publications extremely illuminating.

<sup>12</sup>I find it improbable that for Gondar, purposely founded to be a capital, the Amharic-speaking Emperor would have accepted an Agaw name. Let me propose an alternative etymology. In Western Gurage one finds a word *g'āndār*, a silver armband symbolizing kingship (just like the crown in other civilizations). This word, which has a meaning so perfectly matching the circumstances, may have existed also in Amharic.

<sup>13</sup>Interestingly, Awngi has *šentēlā* for 'hare, rabbit'. Is the initial consonant a prefix?



Palmer 1960 is "an outline of Bilin phonology." His 1965 publication presents the interesting phenomenon of aspect/time reversal in Bilin (4.2.3.6.). His 1966 article on Bilin word classes was invited by the journal *Lingua* as part of a series of papers on word classes. His 1967 article is a comparative statement of Bilin and Awngi.

In the Cushitic chapter of TUCKER AND BRYAN (1966:495-555), Bilin and Awngi represent the Agaw group. The data were supplied by F.R. Palmer and J. Tubiana.

The present writer did fieldwork in Ethiopia on Awngi in 1965-6. This resulted in the following publications: HETZRON 1967 containing a description of the Awngi numeral system along with a study of "incongruence" in Semitic (i.e. opposite gender agreement between numeral and noun). Awngi has a similar phenomenon in measure indication. Hetzron 1969, originally a Ph.D. dissertation, is an extensive treatment of the Awngi verbal system, with special emphasis on morphology. A feature of this treatment is that instead of the intuitively justified constituency of the verbal word "basis + suffix," a division into "extended stem + truncated suffix" is used on the ground that this provides a simpler picture of verbal morphology. This approach was criticized in the three most substantial reviews of this study: Palmer 1970a, Matthews 1971 and Cohen 1971. Yet my "truncated" suffixes are precisely the full suffixes appearing after prefix-conjugated verbs (4.2.3.1.1.) and are thus independently justified. Although devoted to Ethiopian Semitic, Hetzron 1972 also contains a reconstruction of the renewal of plural-marking in Pl.2/3 subject pronouns in various Agaw tongues (4.2.2). Hetzron 1974 deals with the historical reconstruction of the proto-Cushitic verbal conjugation, suggesting, on the basis of "impoverished" paradigms in Somali and Awngi, that the Pl.2/3 ending -n originally fulfilled a modal function. In the new publication *Les langues dans le monde* (intended to replace *Les langues du monde*) the Cushitic languages are illustrated by an outline of Awngi: Hetzron *forthcoming*. Finally, Hetzron *in prep.* is an attempt to show traces of Agaw substratum in Ethiopian Semitic as a whole, and a presentation of the contribution of Agaw to comparative Semitics.

In TUCKER 1967, Bilin and Awngi are used in a typological comparison of Cushitic languages. COHEN 1972 deals with the problem of internal vocalic modification to mark tense in Cushitic, mainly in Beja and Awngi (see 4.2.3.1.2.3. below). C.D. JOHNSON uses a morphophonemic phenomenon of Awngi (4.1.4.3. below) to illustrate the concept of regressive (right-to-left) iterative rules that has to be adopted in generative phonology. BENDER 1971 is a presentation of the lexicostatistics of the languages of Ethiopia. Agaw is represented by Bilin, Xamir (cf. 1.3.), Kemant and Awngi. A basic 99 word list is given in 103 languages including the above four (238-9, 279). Percentages of shared basic vocabulary of 12 Cushitic languages, including these four, are given in Tables 5 and 7 (174-5), and Section 6.4. (209-11) compares Semitic and Agaw vocabulary. DOLGOPOL'SKII has compiled a substantial amount of Agaw material in his comparative historical phonetics of Cushitic (1973).

SASSE 1973 is a review of Bender 1971. Sasse 1974 demonstrates the existence of a subject case (distinct from the absolute case) in Kemant. This is the first competent treatment of Kemant. In summer 1969, MARIO SALTARELLI collected data on Awngi (of Injebara), Kemant (Chilga) and Bilin (Gelas) (MS). He plans to publish his material, with a phonetic/phonemic analysis, after another trip to Ethiopia. ZABORSKI MS deals with consonant alternation in Agaw plurals. Zaborski *forthc.* has a chapter devoted to Agaw.

For general surveys of Agaw, I have already mentioned Beke 1849, Cust 1883 and one chapter in Conti Rossini 1912. Furthermore, BRYAN 1947 also mentions Agaw (13-4) and includes a bibliography. Tucker and Bryan 1956:121-2 is a listing of Agaw languages with a few data about geographic location, followed by a bibliography claimed to be complete, on pp. 201-2. LEVA 1969:48-9, 245 is a bibliographic account of Italian contributions to the study of Agaw.

## 4. A SKETCH OF AGAW

## 4.0. Introduction

## 4.0.1. SOURCES

In the following sketch, Bilin data are taken from publications by F.R. Palmer, Kemant from Sasse (most private communication),<sup>14</sup> Xamta from Conti Rossini, Xamir and Quara from L. Reinisch and Awngi from R. Hetzron (partly unpublished material). When data by other authors, or by the above authors but for other Agaw languages than the one mentioned next to their name, are used, they are marked by the following abbreviations: Bk. for C.T. Beke, CR for Conti Rossini, H for J. Halévy (Falasha of Dembia ~ Quara), P for F.R. Palmer, PB for H. Plazikowsky-Brauner (Lasta = Southern Xamir, Falasha ~ Quara), R for Reinisch and Sl for Saltarelli. It follows that only data by the following authors are to be completely trusted: Palmer (Bilin unless otherwise marked, Awngi), Sasse (Kemant unless marked CR), Saltarelli and Hetzron (Awngi unless marked CR).

Original transcriptions are kept, with very slight modifications. The following symbols replace the parenthesized ones in the original:  $\delta$  ( $j$ ),  $\check{c}$  ( $c$ ),  $\check{j}$  ( $j$ ,  $\check{g}$ ,  $dj$ ),  $\eta$  ( $\dot{n}$ ),  $\gamma$  ( $\check{g}$ , PB:  $\rho$ ),  $x$  ( $\chi$ ,  $h$ ),  $\epsilon$  (R:  $\gamma$ ),  $\ddot{a}$  (P:  $e$ ,  $a$ ). For Awngi,  $c$  stands for the affricate [ts], transcribed by Conti Rossini as  $\dot{s}$ . In a few cases, Quara data have been transliterated from Ethiopian characters. Here a general warning can be given: transcriptions where vowels have macrons ( $\bar{a}$ ) or are underlined are not to be trusted (see 4.1.2. below).

In the illustrations, glosses in quotation marks are often accompanied by literal, morphemic translations, in quotation marks in parentheses. In such translations, + indicates morphemic boundaries that are necessary to point out in that specific case (but not all of them). A hyphen - is used between English words that are rendered by one word in Agaw. Labels for grammatical categories in such morphemic translations begin with a capital letter.

## 4.0.2. THE BRANCHES OF AGAW

It should be obvious by now that there is no such thing as "Agaw language". Agaw is constituted of a number of closely related, but not necessarily mutually intelligible, languages, so that each deserves a separate description. Furthermore, within one language there are dialectal and subdialectal variations. Perforce, the different languages will here be represented by the dialect that happened to be studied by somebody. Sometimes, contradictory data on the same language reflect dialectal variation. To my knowledge, Sasse is the only one who has consistently paid attention to dialectal variation in his study of Kemant.

There has been no reconstruction of the genetic subdivision of Agaw tongues to speak of. The close relationship between Bilin and Xamir on the one hand, Quara and Kemant on the other, and finally between Kunfāl and Awngi, has been noted. Xamta and Xamir have been considered two varieties of the same language, but this is entirely due to a terminological misunderstanding (see 1.3.). In fact they are quite different. Even the meager data on Xamta clearly show that it has some independent features of its own found nowhere else in Agaw, e.g. the conjugation of the nonpast (4.2.3.1.2.). The only serious attempt at a subdivision is found in Conti Rossini 1912:29-30. It is based on the treatment of what appears to be an etymological  $t$ . In Bilin and Xamir, such a  $*t$  is often represented by a  $\kappa$ . For instance, the Semitic loanword 'amāt 'year' appears as *amāra* in Bilin (R) and *amrā* in Xamir (Reinisch 1884, I:22-4). It is interesting to note that the  $t \rightarrow \kappa$  change did not take place in the same manner in the two languages, Xamir has more  $\kappa$ 's in the verbal conjugation, whereas Bilin has a genitive marker  $\kappa$ , still  $t$  in Xamir. This isogloss separates these two from the rest which have a partial change  $t \rightarrow y$ . The word for 'year' is *amtān* in Xamta and *amēt* in Awngi with no change, but it is *amiyā* in Quara and *amʷ* in Kemant, yet all of these languages have instances of  $t \rightarrow y$  change in the marking of the second person of the verb (4.2.3.1.2. and 4.2.3.1.2.1.). It is hard to evaluate the genetic classificatory significance of this isogloss.

<sup>14</sup>Let me express my deep gratitude to Dr. Sasse for patiently answering all my questions in detail.

Awngi stands apart from the rest in several respects, e.g. by having an indefinite aspect in the verb, *-li* is a comitative (directive or locative elsewhere), *-da* is a locative (*-di* is a comitative elsewhere, 4.2.1.2.1.); in the lexicon, *n-* 'say' (*y-* elsewhere), *atti-* 'lack' (*bi-* elsewhere). Some of the special features of Awngi are shared with Sidamo, such as the negative marker *-ti-* (*-g-* elsewhere, 4.2.3.4.), the word *áwá* for 'sun' (*k<sup>w</sup>ara* elsewhere), etc., see Conti Rossini 1905:125 and fn. 44.

#### 4.1. Phonology

##### 4.1.1. CONSONANTS

The typical feature of the Agaw consonant system is the presence of the following phonemes: the velar nasal *ŋ*, the uvulars *q* and *ɣ*. The labialized back consonants *k<sup>w</sup>*, *g<sup>w</sup>*, *q<sup>w</sup>*, *x<sup>w</sup>*, (*ɣ<sup>w</sup>*, *ŋ<sup>w</sup>*) are also found elsewhere. The retroflex (cacuminal) *ɖ* of other Cushitic languages is missing, though the alternation *ɾ/t* in several cases (4.0.2. above, but also Awngi *kəɾē* 'he dies'/'*kəɾē* 'I die') may reflect the earlier existence of such a consonant, which later merged with other consonants. Glottalized (ejective) consonants occur only in Semitic borrowings, with the exception of Bilin *k'* and *k'<sup>w</sup>* which are often found in genuine Agaw words (cf. Reinisch 1882:11). In view of the great phonological similarity between Bilin and Tigrinya/Tigre (Palmer 1960), it is reasonable to surmise that the glottalized articulation is here due to the influence of Semitic tongues, i.e. originally uvular *q* reinterpreted on the phonetic level as an ejective *k'*, e.g. Bilin *k'<sup>w</sup>al-* 'see' vs. Keman *xal* 'id.' cf. 4.1.4.1. In fact, Reinisch (1882:12) does mention different articulations for this phoneme according to generations. In the following, we shall use the symbol *q* also for *k'*. Bilin further has an *ʕ* ('*ayin*') and a *h*. Awngi *c* corresponds to *s* or *ʃ* elsewhere,<sup>15</sup> and in the dialect investigated by me *dz* occurs only in the word *sedza* 'four' and its derivatives.<sup>16</sup> Consonantal gemination is rare, but attested (Awngi, Keman (S1), Bilin (S1)).

Note that the Agaw counterpart of general Cuchitic *m* is *ŋ*, e.g. Galla *lamma*/Agaw *lVŋa* 'two', Galla *mänä*/Xamir-Awngi *ŋən* 'house', etc.

##### 4.1.2. VOWELS

Reinisch and Conti Rossini always indicate length for vowels, but Palmer's, Sasse's and Hetzron's observations show no phonemically relevant length, for Bilin, Keman and Awngi at least.<sup>17</sup> Another annoying habit of the pre-phonemic transcribers is inconsistent marking of the šwa *ə*, as *e*, *i* or *ɨ* (while *ē* and *ī* stand for *e* and *i* respectively).<sup>18</sup> A šwa preceding a labialized back consonant is marked by them as an underlined back vowel, e.g. *uk* for probable *ək<sup>w</sup>*. The phonemic status of *ə* is not clear. Usually it is nonphonemic, introduced mainly to break up undesirable consonant clusters.<sup>19</sup> In the system of these transcribers, *ā* stands for an *a*, and their *a* would be more adequately rendered by *ä*.

<sup>15</sup>For example, Awngi *cew-*, Quara *šäb-*, Xamir *säb-* 'do'; Awngi *cōncā*, Bilin *šīnšā* 'fly'.

<sup>16</sup>The dialect of Awngi studied by Palmer (1959) has no *z*, only *dz*, cf. fn. 24.

<sup>17</sup>For Xamta, Conti Rossini indicates a minimal pair based on length: *ŋu* 'he'/'*ŋū* 'they', but this may also be another type of difference, e.g. diphthong vs. single vowel. For example, Conti Rossini's *nī/nī* for 'he/she' in Keman appears as *nī/nīy* in Sasse's material. What makes me distrust Reinisch' transcriptions completely is that his macrons (for length) and stress-marks make no sense when confronted with Palmer's perfectly reliable tone-marks.

<sup>18</sup>For instance, Reinisch (1882:11) mentions a vocalic *ɾ* which can be "heard" as *ir*, properly *ər*. Halévy is the only one who, misprints apart, consistently marks the šwa by *i* or *e*.

<sup>19</sup>Sasse lists *ə* under "underlying vowel segments" for Keman. Saltarelli also feels that Keman *ə* is "probably phonemic." In Awngi too, there are a few instances of *ə* that can not be distributionally explained: *əɣəɣəŋ* 'laugh', etc.

Besides the five vocalic phonemes  $i$ ,  $(^v)e$ ,  $a$ ,  $(^w)o$ ,  $u$ , Bilin and Kemant have  $\ddot{a}$ , Kemant also a  $^v\text{æ}$  and Awngi an  $\text{æ}$ . The latter two always occur at a morphemic boundary and represent a merger of  $i+a$  for Awngi, and  $\ddot{a}y\ddot{a}/\partial y\ddot{a} \rightarrow ^v\text{æ}$  in Kemant. Kemant  $^ve$  also represents underlying  $\ddot{a}y\partial$ . Awngi  $o$  freely alternates with  $wa$  (the diphthong being preferred by the older generation). In a sequence  $i+\gamma$ , a "furtive" vowel  $\ddot{a}$  is heard:  $[i\ddot{a}\gamma]$  for  $/i\gamma/$ . For Awngi, Palmer (1959:272) also mentions  $^ve$  which had merged in the dialect investigated by me with  $e$ . Historically this comes from  $ya$ .<sup>20</sup>

#### 4.1.3. PROSODY

Both Bilin and Awngi are tone languages while Kemant has only stress. Inadequate work on the other Agaw tongues makes it impossible to make any statement about tone elsewhere. In Bilin, tone is not truly musical. The stressed syllable has high pitch which is "often carried through to following syllables" (Tucker-Bryan 1966:500, after Palmer). Typologically this has to be classified as a tone, for such a stress may be entirely absent from non-clitic words, e.g. *bata* 'dust' vs. *bata* 'louse', respectively interpretable as Mid-Mid Mid-High. In Kemant, all words have stress in isolation, but some may lose it in context. This may also be a trace of an older tonal system. Awngi has four tones: Mid ( $\bar{V}$ ), High ( $\acute{V}$ ), Low ( $\grave{V}$ ) and Falling ( $\breve{V}$ ). The latter two appear in word-final syllables only, Low in open syllables. The Falling tone probably owes its existence to the contraction of diphthongs with a High first mora,  $*aqia \rightarrow aq\acute{e}$  'man-Accusative', and the Low one to a vocalic reduction: when in the suffix  $*uya$  the first vowel was reduced to a labial appendix, the equitonal  $a$  became "creaky":  $-\gamma^{\breve{a}}$ . Minimal oppositions: *yuna* 'woman', *yuna* 'we have eaten', *yuna* 'they ate';  $\gamma^{\breve{a}}$  'I have eaten',  $\gamma^{\breve{a}}$  'he has eaten', etc.

In Awngi, Mid-Mid, High-High and Mid-High sequences are normal, while there is hardly any High-Mid sequence within one lexical morpheme.<sup>21</sup> This is in harmony with the Bilin tendency to carry the High pitch of the stressed syllable over to the following syllables.

An important phenomenon in the Awngi morphotonemic system is the tonal effect a verbal stem may have on the first syllable of the subsequent suffix. Thus, against neutral *zur+a*  $\rightarrow$  *zura* 'he has returned', a RAISING effect is found in *zur<sup>+</sup>a*  $\rightarrow$  *zur<sup>+</sup>a* 'he has strolled'; and against *zur<sup>+</sup>ay<sup>+</sup>a* 'he is returning' (*zur<sup>+</sup>ay<sup>+</sup>a*) or 'he is strolling' (*zur<sup>+</sup>ay<sup>+</sup>a*, where the raising effect can no more modify the High tone), one notes the LOWERING effect in *kink<sup>+</sup>ay<sup>+</sup>a*  $\rightarrow$  *kinkay<sup>+</sup>a* 'he is scared'. Awngi also has cases of tonal dissimilation. The reciprocal ending of the verb (4.2.3.5.1.)  $-\partial\eta-$  always has the tone opposite of the tone of the preceding syllable: *kis<sup>+</sup>\partial\eta<sup>+</sup>an<sup>+</sup>a* 'they exchange', vs. *tas<sup>+</sup>\partial\eta<sup>+</sup>an<sup>+</sup>a* 'they hit each other'. The same is true of the locative ending  $-da$  and the ablative  $-des$  (4.2.1.2.1.): *muri<sup>+</sup>-des* 'from a snake', *muri<sup>+</sup>-des* 'from a village'.

Awngi further has a penultimate stress of intensity. It is interesting to note that for a few nouns the stress is not allowed to leave the base word, e.g. *g'uzgudes* 'from that of the belly' (*guzog*) vs. *giz'udes* 'from that of time' (*giz* 'time',  $u$  genitive and  $des$  ablative). In Xamir, stress falls on one of the last two syllables, conditioned by vowel quality.

#### 4.1.4. SOME MORPHOPHONEMIC ALTERNATIONS

##### 4.1.4.1. BILIN CONSONANT MUTATION

In Bilin nouns, "there is consonantal alternation between singular and plural forms, and in a few cases, between masculine and feminine forms" (Palmer 1960:111 cf. Zaborski, MS.). In the following

<sup>20</sup>Still so in Bruce's documents, *kantiyati* for modern *kanteti* 'she sees'. Cf. also PB: *kalliātē* for *kaletē* 'she can'.

<sup>21</sup>One exception: *bādbaday* 'dove', probably an expressive word.

pairs, the singulars have the first (in most cases voiced) consonant, and the plurals the second, voiceless one: *b/ɸ*, *d/t*, *d/s*, *d/š*, *ɾ/t*, *ɾ/l*, *l/t*, *ʃ/š*, *g/k*, *g"/k"*, *w/k"*, *x/k*, *x/q*, *x"/q"*. As can be seen, from one one cannot predict the other. This alternation may affect the last consonant: *gāluda/gālut* 'big knife', the second last (when the last one is not on the list of the alternating consonants): *gəḏəɲ/gəḏəɲ* 'dog', *därguma/därkum* 'sycamore', or both *dəx"ara/dəq"al* 'donkey'. These pairs may be important for the reconstruction of proto-Bilin consonants. The double correspondence *x/k* vs. *x/q* suggests that the second *x* was originally a *ɣ* (cf. Kemant *dəɣ"ärä*, Awngi *dəɣ"arī* 'donkey'). *x/q* also suggests that the ejective pronunciation of the latter (4.1.1.) is a secondary development, — originally both were uvular stops. *ɾ/t* is also known interdialectally (4.0.2.). Since *ɾ* is replaced by *d* after *ɾ*, *l* or *n*,<sup>22</sup> one has to reconstruct here an older retroflex *ɖ*.

Note that Xamir and Kemant have some instances of consonant mutation, but not regularly as in Bilin. E.g. Xamir *amīt* 'year', singulative *amrā* (*ɾ/t*); *duqāl* 'donkey', singulative *duqārā* (*ɾ/l*); *dirkūn* 'sycamore', singulative *dṛunā* (*ɸ/k*), *arḡ/arbīt* 'month' (*ɸ/b* for sg./pl.). In Kemant, a handful of nouns show similar alternation: *äɣ"äy/äx"ät* 'head' (*ɣ"/x"* and *y/t*), before the plural ending *-tō* in *dəɣ"ära/dəx"altō* 'donkey' (*ɣ"/x"* and *ɾ/l*), with reduplicative plural (4.2.1.1.) *ənɣ"ə/ənɣ"äk* 'ear' (*x"/k"*), *giy/gikāk* 'horn' (*y/k*). Also in Falasha (H) one finds *duyara/duyalt* 'donkey' (*ɾ/l*), *dirhua/dirku* 'rooster' (*h/k*).

#### 4.1.4.2. AWNGI DEVOICING

There is consonantal alternation in stem-final position of the verb. The voiceless consonant is used in the Sg.lc. and the imperative only: *sebē* 'he fights', *sebtē* 'she fights' or 'you (sg.) fight', *sebnē* 'we fight', but *sepē* 'I fight', *sēp* 'fight!'. The pairs are *p/b*, *p/w*, *t/d*, *t/y*,<sup>23</sup> *t/ɾ*, *c/z*,<sup>24</sup> *č/ʃ*, *k/g*, *k/y*, *k"/g"*, *q/ɣ*, *q"/ɣ"*. For the historical explanation of this devoicing, let me offer the following. The Cushitic suffixes come from prefix-conjugated auxiliaries (4.2.3.1.2., Praetorius 1894:331). In this case, *desē* 'I study' or 'he studies' represents the conflation of *\*des+ʔē* for Sg.lc. and *\*des+yē* for Sg.3m., where *ʔ-* and *y-* are prefixes well-known from Semitic, also attested in Cushitic (4.2.3.1.1.). It is possible that stem-final voiced consonants tended to be devoiced in a pre-pause position, hence *sēp* in the imperative (from *\*sēb#*). Now, a glottal stop is the phonetic equivalent of a pause. It is the closure of the air passage. Thus, the devoicing may have operated before the glottal stop also: *\*seb+ʔē* → *sepē*. In all other cases, the final consonant was followed by a suffix.<sup>25</sup>

#### 4.1.4.3. AWNGI ASSIMILATION OF VOCALIC HEIGHT

In the vocalic domain, one finds alternations like *muliqēsī* 'monk', *moleqēsā* 'nun', *moleqēškā* 'monks, nuns'; *muliṽiti* 'you (sg.) chew' or 'she chews', *moleyetē* 'I chew' or 'he chews', *moleyetəɲ* 'to chew'. In the first members of both sets, there is a suffixal *-i*. Palmer (1959:273, 280; 1967:1492-3) represented this as vowel harmony. In Hetzron 1967:178-9, there is a wrong representation taking the first members as basic. Still in an erroneous spirit, the right description is given in Hetzron 1969:8, and the right description

<sup>22</sup>E.g. *gäb+ɾäk* 'you (sg.) refuse', but *q"al+däk* 'you see'. The same is true for Xamir.

<sup>23</sup>Here I accept Palmer's analysis (1959:271, 1970:207) against mine in Hetzron 1969, 2.1.4. See also Matthews 1971:150.

<sup>24</sup>The correspondence *c/z* makes it probable that *dz* recorded by Palmer for what I found to be a *z* (fn. 16) is more original.

<sup>25</sup>Note that, to my knowledge, this is the only piece of internal evidence for proto-Cushitic Sg.lc. *ʔ-*. The actual attested forms have an initial vowel *a-* or *i-*. Plazikowsky-Brauner (1965:99) suggested that *sep-* had come from *\*sep+n-*.



in the right spirit, as a regressive assimilation, in Hetzron *forthcoming*, 2. It consists of the following. If the suffix *-i* is added to a root having *e* as its last vowel, the latter also becomes *i*, and so do all the possible preceding *e*'s as long as there is no other intervening vowel. If the regressive chain *e* → *i* encounters an *o*, this one becomes an *u*. There is no instance of more than one *o* in succession. The *i* triggering the change has to be suffixal, cf. *šereritī* 'spider' where *i* is the last stem vowel. The assimilation cannot communicate through other vowels, e.g. *gomejantī* 'hurrying person', nor can *o* be affected without a catalyzing *e* → *i*, *-goryī* 'spade'. A few recent borrowings are exempt from this assimilation: *terepezī* 'table'. C.D. Johnson (1972:74-5) used this phenomenon as an illustration of a left-linear (regressive) iterative rule, i.e. a chain process.

The alternation *bīr* 'blood' / *beḥā* 'drop of blood' (singulative) in Xamir (Reinisch 1884, I:13) probably has nothing to do with the above phenomenon. It may be a mere reduction of unstressed *i* to *ə*, *bīr* / *bəḥā*.

#### 4.1.4.4. BILIN VOWEL HARMONY

Such harmony is confined to the past tense stem and the forms derived from it (e.g. the future) (Reinisch 1882, §66, Palmer 1957:148). Example: *gāb+dānāt* '(says) that you refused', vs. *jab+dīnēt* '(says) that you bought', where the suffixes are basically the same. Since this is limited to suffixes in some tenses (but not all of them), and it does not seem to be governed by the phonemic composition of the verb stem, one wonders if this phenomenon deserves the appellation "vowel harmony" in the manner it is used in languages like Turkish, Hungarian. See further 4.2.3.1.2.1.

## 4.2. Morphology

### 4.2.1. NOUNS

#### 4.2.1.1. GENDER AND NUMBER

Agaw nouns distinguish two genders: masculine and feminine, and two numbers: singular and plural. Only the singular exhibits gender-distinction.<sup>26</sup> The feminine refers to female beings or is a diminutive or pejorative (Meinhof 1912:22-5). For mass- and generic nouns, the base form is a collective, and a singulative ending forms the singular. Such a singulative singular may have its own plural, Xamir *bīl* 'moth', singulative *beḥā* 'a moth', plural *bille* 'a swarm of moths'. Sometimes the collective also has its plural, yielding a quadruple system as in Bilin (R) *dimmū* 'cat', *dīmāmū* 'cats', generic, vs. individualized *dimmū+rā* 'a/the [specific] cat', *dimmū+t* 'a/the group of cats'.

MASCULINE SINGULARS have no particular ending except in part of the nouns in Awngi: *-i*, e.g. *dūri* 'rooster' (cf. *sēn* 'brother', *gsēn* 'dog'). The feminine singular is consistently marked *-a* in Awngi: *dūra* 'hen', *sēna* 'sister', *gsēnā* 'bitch'. Kemant has very rare traces of feminine in *-a*: *xāšān/xāšāna* 'thief (m./f.)'. Elsewhere one finds occasional feminine endings: *-i*,<sup>27</sup> Bilin *gəḋəŋ* 'dog' / *gəḋəŋi* 'bitch'; *-t(i)* in Falasha (H): *diruā* 'rooster' /

<sup>26</sup>Palmer speaks of *number-cum-gender* as one tripartite category.

<sup>27</sup>Reinisch (1909:277-8) derives this *-i* from an older *-ti*. Yet a feminine *-y* is not unattested in the Afroasiatic family. The feminine of the Arabic elative is formed by a *-y* (spelled so, but traditionally not pronounced). In pronouns, one finds masc. *u* and fem. *i*, e.g. Arabic *huwa/hiya*, Somali *wuu/way* for 'he/she'. On the other hand, in those Agaw languages which have had the change *t* → *y*, mainly Kemant, there are feminine *-y*'s coming from *t*, e.g. the relative/genitive feminine ending (4.2.1.2.2.2.), in the pronoun *nīy* 'she' (from *\*nit*).

*diruēt* 'hen'. Note that in Bilin, a *-t-* appears after feminine nouns preceding an ablative or directive ending, e.g. *dəxna* 'old man' or 'old woman', but *dəxna+lōd* 'from an old man' and *dəxna+tō+lōd* 'from an old woman' (4.2.1.2.1.). A few nouns, mainly kinship terms, have a prefixed *t-* for feminine marker, e.g. *tādāra* (Bilin (R), Kemant, Quara) 'lady' (vs. *ādāra* 'lord'),<sup>28</sup> Bilin (R) *teyri*, Xamir *tayir*, Quara *tayri* 'paternal aunt' (cf. *eyir/ayir* 'father'), Bilin (R) *tānšīn* 'mother-in-law' (*anšin* 'father-in-law'), Kemant *tān* 'grandmother' (*ān* 'grandfather'). Such prefixal *t-* for feminine is found also in Beja. In some cases, consonantal mutation (4.1.4.1.) marks gender: Bilin *dan* 'brother'/'*šan* 'sister', *əx'ra* 'son'/'*əq'ra* 'daughter', also Quara *žān* 'brother'/'*šēn* 'sister'. In Bilin and Kemant, membership in different declension classes may indicate gender distinction, see *dəxna* right above, also Bilin *ḵəma* 'wife's brother/sister', but in the accusative *ḵəmə+s* for masc. and *ḵəmə+t* for fem., or dative masc. *ḵəmə+d*, fem. *ḵəmə+š*; in Kemant *x'əra* 'son' or 'daughter' in the absolute case, but in the subject case *yə+x'əri* 'my+son', *yə+x'əra* 'my+daughter',<sup>29</sup> and in the dative *x'əra+z* 'to the son', vs. *x'əra+š* 'to the daughter'. For animals, often a prefixed word ('male/female', 'father/mother') indicates sex. In Xamir the feminine demonstrative (4.2.2.2.) *-žān* is used: *gā* 'horn'/'*gāžān* 'little horn'. Otherwise, only verbal agreement shows gender (4.3.2.1.).

Awngi has no SINGULATIVE. Elsewhere it is marked by an ending *-a* (Bilin (R), Xamir, sometimes *-rā*). The singulative ending may originally have been a feminine ending, like Awngi *-a*. Reinisch (1882:85) indicates that Bilin *ar* 'corn, grain', a collective, is a masculine, whereas its singulative *arā* 'one piece of grain' is a feminine. Cf. also Quara *nān* 'hand', singulative *nānā* 'finger', Awngi *būn* 'coffee' (drink), *būna* 'coffee bean'.

PLURAL-marking is quite heterogeneous in the Agaw languages (Reinisch 1909:283-6, Conti Rossini 1912:113-30). In many nouns, two plural forming processes may be simultaneously applied, e.g. Bilin *gix/gikək* 'horn', reduplication of final radical and consonantal mutation (4.1.4.1.). Reduplication is one of the processes attested everywhere. Complete reduplication is very rare: Bilin (R) *gānā/gāngān* 'mother', Xamir *arīb/arībrib* 'Friday', Falasha (H) *yir/yiryir* 'man', zen/zenezen 'brother', Awngi (CR) *xarūj/xarūjāxarūjā* 'stone', (Bruce MS): *anka/ankanka* 'girl'. In Awngi, the reduplicated element ends in *-a* and its second occurrence has High tone: *kisī/kisakīsā* 'priest', *yuna/yunayūnā* 'woman'. Partial reduplication is somewhat better attested: Falasha (H) *kirūja/kirkirūja* 'stone', but usually the last radical is repeated: Bilin *ək'ī/ək'ək'ək*, Kemant *īrk'ə/īrk'āk'ək* 'tooth'.

For many nouns, the singulative/collective pair provides the singular/plural, Bilin *bək'āna/bək'ān* 'cloud', Xamta *fiqrā/fiqār* 'goat' Kemant *šämmāna/šämmān* 'black', Quara *kerūjā/kerūj* 'stone', where dropping the final *-a* forms the plural, though, as shown above, there may sometimes be a further plural of singulative. In Awngi, nouns with the masculine ending *-i* may form their plural by dropping the *-i*, e.g. *aqī* 'man'/'*aq* (or *aqkā*) 'men'. Final *-a* of singular becomes *-i* in the plural in some cases: Bilin *qanša/qanši* 'straw', *šinšā/šinši* 'fly' (note the change of stress), perhaps Kemant *xūmba/xumbō* 'nose', and regularly for kinship terms obligatorily preceded by possessive pronouns in Awngi: *yitalā/yitali* 'my father/ancestors'. This may be a trace of polarity (Meinhof 1912:18-20) whereby a noun changing number also changes gender (though Bilin declension shows no such polarity, e.g. *šinšā+d/šinši+d* 'to a fly/flies', both with masculine dative ending). Awngi has very clear cases of such polarity in nouns where the feminine is semantically inapplicable: *ḵərjā* 'male human', pl. *ḵərjā*; *bīrī/berā* 'ox', where pure feminine formation yields a plural.

<sup>28</sup>Plazikowsky-Brauner (1958:128) gives for Falasha: *edērā* 'lord', *koderā* 'master of the house', *taderā* 'mistress of the house', thus also a masculine prefix *k'-*.

<sup>29</sup>Note also the difference in stress. Would the persistence of the *-a* in the feminine indicate the earlier existence of a feminine ending *-a* also here? In fact, many basically feminine nouns end in *-a* in several Agaw tongues, Bilin-Quara-Kemant *gāna* 'mother', Quara-Kemant *kāma*, Xamir *luwā*, Awngi *əllwā* for 'cow' (though Bilin (R) has *luwī*).

In Xamta one finds rare instances of broken plural (i.e. based on internal vocalic changes) not only in Semitic borrowings (for which broken plurals may be found also in other languages), but in genuine Agaw words: *gezēŋ/agzēŋ* 'dog', *gír/ax"ér* 'son'. In Bilin, internal consonantal mutation (4.1.4.1.), sometimes combined with other plural forming devices, is used: *gix/gíkək* 'horn', *gəḏəŋ/gəḏəŋ* 'dog', *əx"ina/ək"in* 'woman' (-a dropped), *nəx"ax"/nəx"aq"ti* 'husband's father', etc. See 4.1.4.1. for comparable plural-formations in other languages. This mutation is sometimes used also for feminine-marking (see above), Bilin has triplets like *əx"ra/əq"ra/əq"ər* 'son/daughter/sons', *dan/šanī/šān* 'brother/sister/brothers' where the feminine and the plural have the same consonant, but the plural is shorter.

The most productive plural-marking process is the addition of suffixes. In Awngi, almost any noun may have a plural ending -ka, *dūri* 'rooster'/'hen'/'*dūrka* 'roosters, hens, chickens', *gsēŋ/gsēŋkā* 'dog', *kārēŋ/kārēŋkā* 'stone', *gurgəm/gurgəmkā* 'neck' (note the change in tone). In Kemant "all types of plural formations are gradually replaced by -ək" (Sasse), -kə is rare: *gəzəŋ/gəzəŋkə* 'dog', *nəŋ/nəŋkə* 'house'. Plural in k in Quara: *gezeŋ/gezeŋkan* 'dog', (H) *yir/yirki* 'man'. The most frequent plural ending, however, begins with t (not attested in Awngi): Bilin *ləŋəŋ/ləŋəŋti* 'house', *nan/nantət* 'hand', Xamir *gizūŋ/gizūŋte* 'dog', *nān/nānt* 'hand', *ir/irt* or *irtān* 'father', and a very remarkable example: *zin* 'brother' or 'sister', but *zint* 'brothers' and *zintān* 'sisters'. In Kemant, -tə is added to nouns ending in l/r/n and to Amharic borrowings ending in -b, e.g. *bīra/biltə* 'ox'; -tān is used in some kinship terms *anšin/anšintān* 'father-in-law'. Note that the Kemant plural suffixes are all stressed. Xamta has *meqā/meqāt* or *meqānt* 'shepherd'. Awngi has some rare instances of plural in -ri, *nēw/nēwari* 'calf', *əncay* 'boy'/'*əncāyā* 'girl'/'*əncayari* 'children', -ya 'son of'/'-ja 'daughter of'/'-yirī 'children of', in Bruce MS: *kupi/kupar(ə?)* 'fruit'. Xamta further has -u, *ägir/ägirū* 'man'.

#### 4.2.1.2. CASE

##### 4.2.1.2.1. Sentence-case.

I am using this term to exclude here the adnominal case: the genitive (see below). Case-marking in Agaw operates by means of case-endings and postpositions. In the following, I am dealing only with the case-endings, i.e. the morphological cases. In Bilin and Kemant, the gender of the preceding noun may regulate the choice of the case-marker. In Table 1 arrows indicate modification of the final vowel of the base form.

Table 1: AGAW CASES

	Bilin		Kemant		Awngi
	masc.	fem.	masc.	fem.	
Absolute I	ϕ		$\left\{ \begin{array}{ll} -a/\phi & -\phi \\ \phi/-\phi/-a \rightarrow \ddot{a} \\ -\ddot{i}/-\phi/\phi & -\phi \end{array} \right\}$		ϕ
Absolute II					
Subject					
Accusative	-s(i)	-t(i)	-s	-t	-i → -e, -o/-wa <sup>30</sup>
Dative	-d	-s <i>i</i>	$\left\{ \begin{array}{ll} -z & -\ddot{s} \\ & -\ell(i) \end{array} \right\}$		-s(i)
Locative					-da (CR: s <i>i</i> )
Ablative	-ləd	-tələd	-ləz		-des (P: -das)
Directive	-l(i)	-təl	-wa		-šo/yula

<sup>30</sup>After a genitive or a compound noun (4.2.1.2.2., 4.3.2.2.), the accusative is -sa and the equative -sta, e.g. *ŋēn* 'house', acc. *ŋəno*; *ŋənā* 'little house', acc. *ŋənāwa*; *ŋənu* 'of the house', acc. *ŋənusa*; *əlləŋənā* 'orbit of eye' (lit.: 'eye-house'), acc. *əlləŋənāsa*.



(Table 1 continued)

	Bilin		Kemant		Awngi
	masc.	fem.	masc.	fem.	
Translative	—	—	—	—	-a
Equative	(säna)	—	(säna)	—	-ta <sup>30</sup> (arch. -ŋa)
Invocative	—	—	—	—	-jas
Comitative	-di	—	-di	—	-li

In Kemant, Absolute I is the lexical shape of the word, when pronounced in isolation, Absolute II is for an indefinite object and the predicative, and there is a special Subject case.<sup>31</sup> Elsewhere, the same case serves the subject, the predicative, identical with the lexical shape. In Bilin and Kemant, the accusative is used with definite objects only;<sup>32</sup> for indefinite ones, Bilin uses the nominative (Absolute-Subject). The dative 'to' also serves as an instrumental 'with' in all three, and also as a locative 'at, in' in Bilin, and in the Awngi dialect investigated by Conti Rossini (Kunfāl has a locative -zi).<sup>33</sup> In Kemant, the ablative 'from' may also be expressed by the locative. Kunfāl has an ablative -da, homonymous with the Awngi locative. The Kemant directive ('toward') is obsolete. The translative means '(to turn) into' (e.g. *cārka-ā fīyēl-ā yaŋūyā* 'it became a black sheep' with -ā), it is also used for the predicate with a negative copula<sup>34</sup> and, rarely, as a directive, for places where one usually goes.<sup>35</sup> The equative 'like, as' is not a proper case in Bilin and Kemant, -säna is a postposition. In Awngi, it has two forms, the second one -ŋa is archaic (cf. Xamir below), it is added to the last consonant of the noun (unlike the other case which can be added to a final -i), and has a slightly different, adverbial meaning, e.g. *aqī+ta* 'like a man', but *aq+ŋa* 'as a man, humanely'. -ŋa does not tolerate a qualifier before the noun. The Awngi invocative is used only in implorations: *dəbān+jas* 'by God, for God's sake/love'. The comitative is 'with' only in the sense of 'in the company of'.

<sup>31</sup>For example (Sasse 1974)

<i>färz+i dəγ'ärtä āgaγ</i>	'horse+Subj. donkey+Abs.II is-not'
<i>dəγ'är+i färz+ä āgaγ</i>	'donkey+Subj. horse+Abs.II is-not'

<sup>32</sup>For Kemant (Sasse), as against the absolute I form *āx* 'water', one finds in context as an object:

<i>āx'+ə jārābək</i>	('water+Abs.II I-want')	'I want water'
<i>ax'+əs jārābək</i>	('water+Acc. I-want')	'I want the water'

<sup>33</sup>In Awngi, the locative is also the case of the possessor in a possessive predication: *aqī+da ŋən zək'a* ('man+Loc. house there-is') 'The man has a house', cf. *ŋənda aqī zək'a* 'In the house is a man'.

<sup>34</sup>Example: *ŋi gud+a gatəššiy'ä* 'he was not good' (*gud* 'good'), whereas in an affirmative construction the predicate is in the subject case: *ŋi gud ššiy'ä* 'he was good'.

<sup>35</sup>For instance, before the verb *kasəštūyā* 'I/he was going', any one of the following forms may be used: *murī+šo* or *murī yula* 'toward the village' (not necessarily completing the approach), also acc. *murē* or dative *murī+s* 'to the village' (implying arrival), where the noun may also be preceded by a qualifier; but in the translative, *murā* cannot be preceded by any qualifier and may refer only to the major village in the area, cf. English 'to town' vs. 'to the town/city'.

In the other Agaw languages, inaccurate descriptions make the listing of cases difficult. The accusative is most often in *-t* (Falasha (H) also *-s*, fn. 36), the dative is *-s/-š* in most languages (Falasha (H) also *-zi*<sup>36</sup>), the locative, used indifferently for being in, going to, and leaving a place, is *-s/-li/-z*, but one finds an alternative ablative for the last meaning *-is/-tis/-gis* in Xamir. This ablative is the only case that can be used in Xamir for the comparative ('more/less than'), also expressed elsewhere by the ablative, in Bilin also by *ṣṣṣ*. Xamta apparently borrowed its ablative *enkā-* or *kī-* (prepositions!) from Tigrinya. Another preposition is indicated in Xamta for the locative: *lōw*. The equative 'like' is rendered by the postposition *sāna* in most languages, but Xamir also has *-ṣā*.

To sum up, the ending *-s* appears as a dative-instrumental, sometimes also locative, everywhere. It may be related to the Semitic dative-locative *š* reconstructed by Diakonoff (1965:88, fn. 58), cf. Akkadian *yā+šī* ('me+to') 'to me'. Except for Awngi, the accusative can be reconstructed as *-t*, also to be compared with Akkadian *-ti* occurring in object pronouns: *yā+ti* (Agaw *yot*) 'me'.<sup>37</sup> The Awngi accusative is to be reconstructed as *-wa* or *-a*, the first of which looks like the directive *-wa* of the other Agaw languages (Sasse, 1974, 4). The directive is *-wa* also in Sidamo. The relation between *-wa* and *-a* is not clear. It may be that the two come from different original case-endings and became combined in an allomorphic distribution in Awngi. In this case, *-a* may have some kind of relationship with the Semitic accusative *-a*. The transitive *-a* is probably also connected with this. *-li* is a comitative in Awngi (like in Saho), but a locative elsewhere. The Awngi locative *-da* may be related to the comitative *-di* of the other Agaw idioms which have *-l(i)/-z(i)* for locative. Saho also has a locative in *-d* or *-l*. It is interesting to note that the ablative (Bilin *-lād*, Kemant *-lāz*, Awngi *-des*, possibly *-tis* in Xamir) is always composite, the first part resembling the locative and the second the dative.

#### 4.2.1.2.2. Genitive

Here we have to distinguish between a NON-AGREEING genitive where the genitival noun is marked either by position only, or by an ending, but always precedes the possession, and an AGREEING genitive, where there are three genitive endings exhibiting agreement in number and gender with the possession (the headnoun, *nomen regens*).

##### 4.2.1.2.2.1. Non-agreeing genitive

The genitival noun (possessor) always precedes the possession. For genitive-marker, Bilin has *a → i* otherwise  $\emptyset$  in masculine nouns, *-r* in feminine nouns, and *-a → \emptyset* in plural nouns. Here the gender and number refer to the genitival noun. After an agreeing genitive or a relative, there is *-d* (e.g. *gədəŋəx+əd* 'of that of a dog'). In Xamir and Quara, *-a → \emptyset* or *-i* (Xamir *amīr bāl* 'new year's day', cf. *amrā* 'year'; Quara *ḥāji bāl* 'the holiday of Passover', cf. *ḥājā* 'Passover'). Other alternative endings signalled are *-z*, *-s*, *-t* (Xamir *birru+t ṣṣṣ* 'Birru's house', Quara, also *ḥāji+z bāl* 'the Passover holiday'.). For Quara, Reinisch indicates that after feminine nouns *-š* is used. Masc, *-z* and fem. *-š* seem to be identical with the dative (cf. fn. 36). Kemant has *-a → -i* or *-ə* after a consonant in the masculine, *-y* after the feminine and *-ä* in the plural.

The spurious *-s-* appearing in Awngi after a genitive and before an accusative, an equative (fn. 30) and another genitive (see below) may be a trace of an old non-agreeing genitive homonymous with the dative. Bilin post-genitive genitive *-d* is also homonymous with the dative. The resemblance is striking.

<sup>36</sup>It is probable that the Quara case endings are really the same as in Kemant. Halévy (1873: 162) gives *nizi* 'to him', *niši* 'to her', also *nit* 'him', *niti* 'her' (accusative), and finally, in one case *niš+li* 'toward her'.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. Reinisch 1909:266-70. The special significance of these Akkadian forms is that they exhibit a "person-case" order like Agaw, while the typical Semitic order is "case-person," e.g. *l+i*: 'to+me'.

Finally, Awngi has a genitival compounding process where the possessor precedes the possession, and the latter ends in *-a* (which does not make it a feminine): *ḥllḥḥḥnā* ('eye-house') 'orbit of eye', *ārḥḥḥḥḥa* ('month's half') 'fortnight'. After these compounds, the accusative, equative and genitive appear preceded by the aforementioned *-s-* (*ārḥḥḥḥḥasta* 'like a fortnight').

#### 4.2.1.2.2.2. Agreeing Genitive

This is the only productive genitive formation in Awngi. Here genitive-marking shows agreement with the possession, independently of the gender and number of the possessor: masc. *-u*, fem. *-t*, pl. *-k* (*-su/-st/-sk* after another genitive, cf. fn. 30), e.g. *aqi+w dūri* 'the man's rooster', *aqi+t dūra* 'the man's hen', *aqi+k dūrka* 'the man's chickens'. For possessed nouns ending in a consonant (only masc. sg.) an optional *-i* is added: *aqi+w ḥḥn(i)* 'the man's house'. Elsewhere, such agreeing genitives are used alternatively with non-agreeing genitives. Bilin has *-x*/*-ri/-w* for masc./fem./pl. possession (here the possessor follows the possessed (4.3.1.3.)). Kemant has *-y*/*-y/-w* (fn. 27) and Xamir *-ū/-l/-uk* (e.g. *birrū+tū zin* 'Birru's brother', *birrū+tū zin* 'Birru's sister', *birrū-tuk zintān* 'Birru's sisters', where the genitive *-t-* is combined with the agreement elements). For Akkadian comparison, see possessive pronouns in 4.2.2.1. For Quara, see 4.2.1.3.

Agreeing genitive takes further case-markers: Bilin *gərwi+x*+*as*, Kemant *gərwa+y*+*ās*, Awngi *aqi+w+sa* 'that of the man' in the accusative. With no headnoun mentioned, the agreeing genitive is the only one used: Kemant *i+muxala+y*+*ās* *ḥḥḥḥ* ('my+friend+Masc.Gen.+Acc. I-took') 'I took my friend's (one)' (cf. Palmer 1966:203-4).

#### 4.2.1.3. ADJECTIVES

One has to distinguish between primitive adjectives (relatively few, completely absent in Xamir and Quara), and deverbal relative ones. Adjectives (preceding the noun everywhere except Bilin, 4.3.1.3.) agree with the noun they qualify in number and gender (and in case in Awngi, 4.3.2.2.). Deverbal relative adjectives have the same agreement endings as the agreeing genitive (4.2.1.2.2.2.). Others behave like nouns from a morphological point of view. In Bilin, the feminine ends in *-i* and the plural *-an* or has any of the shapes a plural noun can assume (4.2.1.1.), e.g. *kabər/kabrī/kabran* 'proud', *kəxin/kəxinī/kəkin* 'clever'. The same is true for Kemant: *šämmāna* (subj.: *šämmānī*)/*šämmāna* (subj. *šämmāna*)/*šämmān* 'black', and Awngi *qud/guda/gudkā* 'good'. In Quara, for denominative adjectives (like *bū* 'earthly' from *biyā* 'earth'), the endings *-ū/-ē/-ū* are given, but they are practically the same as for relative adjectives (which further have a preceding *a*). For Falasha, Halévy gives masc. *-ay*, fem. *-ē*, e.g. *way dēbu* 'big mountain', *wē katama* 'big city'. For Quara (including Falasha) no information is available on agreeing genitives, but the shape of these agreement endings of the adjectives suggests that these are properly agreeing genitive endings. According to Palmer, Bilin agreeing genitives are also mainly adjectivally used, i.e. *gəḥḥḥḥ* 'of dog' (masc.) is basically 'canine'. We may then tentatively conclude that, except for Awngi, the agreeing genitive is functionally an adjective.

#### 4.2.2. PRONOUNS

##### 4.2.2.1. PERSONAL PRONOUNS

The INDEPENDENT (subject) pronouns of Agaw are the following: Singular, 1st person *an*, 2nd person usually *Vnt* (Bilin *əntī*, Kemant *əntā*, Awngi *ənt*), but Xamta and Xamir have forms derived from the bound pronouns (see below): Xamir *kit* (d'Abbadie: *kōtā*) and Xamta, the only language to offer gender-distinction in this person: masc. *ketā*, fem. *kit*. The 3rd persons are based on an initial nasal. No gender distinction exists in Awngi: *ḥi* 'he=she' and in Quara according to Reinisch *nī* and Halévy *nī*. Bilin has *nī/nər* (R: *nirī*), Xamta *ḥu/ḥinē*, Xamir *ieḥ/ḥir* (d'Abbadie *yānga/ḥḥra*; Lasta (PB) *ḥḥḥ/ḥḥḥ*), Kemant *nī/nīy* (= Falasha (PB) *nī/nī*) for 'he/she'. It is possible that Reinisch and Halévy did not recognize length-distinction in Quara, properly interpreted as single vowel vs. diphthong (cf. fn. 17). Awngi, on the

other hand, has only one form for both genders. In the plural, the first person is Bilin *yōn*, Xamir *inā*, Xamta *yinne* or *yin*, Quara and Kemant (CR) *anān*, Kemant (Sasse) *ānniw/āndiw/ānāndiw* according to the dialect, Angi *ənnoʃi* (BK *enū*), Kunfāl *nʰa*. Pl.2: Bilin *əntōn*, Kemant (CR) *intān* (Sasse) *əntā(n)diw*, Quara *entān*, Awngi *əntōʃi* (Bk. *əntū*, in the dialect investigated by me, *əntu* is the polite second person); Xamir has *kūten(tāy)* (d'Abbadie *kōtōnā*) and Xamta *ketōu*, derived, as in the singular, from the bound pronouns. For Pl.3. Bilin has *naw*, Xamir *ḡāy(tāy)* (d'Abbadie *nga*), Quara and Kemant (CR) *nāy*, Kemant (Sasse) *nā(y)diw*, Awngi *ḡāʃi* (CR *ḡā*, Bk *engā*, in my dialect *ḡa* is a polite third person); Xamta is particularly interesting here because it is reported to have gender distinction: Pl.3m. *ḡū*, Pl.3f. *ḡit*.

One can see that Pl.2. is usually Sg.2.+Vn. This plural marker (*ān*) was also added to Pl.1. in Kemant (CR and Sasse's last version). In Awngi, the corresponding plural-marker is *-u*, also used in Pl.1c. One finds that these plural-markers, *-ān* and *-u* were strengthened by a further plural-marker, an optional *-tāy* for Pl.2/3. in Xamir, and *-diw* in Kemant and *-ʃi* in Awngi for all persons of the plural. The polite pronouns of Awngi and older attestations of the languages still show forms without these added plural-markers (cf. Hetzron 1972, T.2.c.).

The BOUND pronouns follow a simple, relatively uniform pattern: Sg.1c. *y-*, Sg.2. *kʰ-* (also *ti-* in Kemant, especially in the Armačāho dialect, masc. *kō-*, fem. *ki-* in Xamir according to d'Abbadie); for Sg.3. there is *ḡi-* in Awngi with no gender-distinction, Sg.3m. *nī-* for Bilin, Kemant and Quara, *ḡi-* in Xamir, Sg.3f. Bilin *nəḥ-*, Xamir *ḡiḥ-*, Quara-Kemant *nīḥ-*. Plural 1. is *yən(ā)-* or *anā-*, but Awngi has *ən-*, Pl.2. *əntā-* and the like, except in Xamir: *kūtā*. For Falasha, Halévy gives *kitāntai* (cf. Xamir independent pronoun) in one place (1873: 161) and *entēn-* in another (1873:166). Pl.3. is *ḡa-* in Xamir and Awngi, and *na-* in Bilin, Quara and Kemant.

The bound pronouns are used by themselves as possessives before nouns, with some unalienable possessions only in Awngi (and possibly elsewhere). For other nouns, bound pronouns followed by agreeing genitive endings are used, Awngi *yī+yo* 'my home', but *yī+w ḡōn* 'my house'. The set *yī+w/yī+t/yī+kʰ* 'my, mine' (with masc./fem./pl. possession) is paralleled by the Akkadian possessive pronoun *yāʔum/yattum/yaʔūtum* 'mine' (masc./fem./pl. possession, *-um* is an ending). Bound pronouns and agreeing genitive endings are used everywhere when no noun is used, e.g. Bilin (R) *yux* 'mine', but Halévy mentions for Falasha *sami* preceded by bound pronouns for this function.

According to Reinisch, but not Halévy, the bound pronouns directly attached to the Quara verb may be used for pronominal objects. Otherwise, bound pronouns + case-endings are used for pronominal complements, Awngi *yī-wa*, elsewhere *yō+t* for 'me' accusative, etc. Tucker and Bryan (1966:521-2) give object suffixes Sg.2. *-ku*, Sg.3m. *-wī*, Sg.3f. *-utī*, Pl.3. *-ukī* for Awngi, but these do not occur in the dialect investigated by me. In Bilin (R) there is a set of accusative-dative suffix pronouns attached to the verb: Sg.1. *-lā*, 2m. *-kā*, 2f. *-kē*, 3m. *-lū*, 3f. *-lā*, Pl.1. *-nā*, 2. *-kūm*, 3m. *-lom*, 3f. *-lān* (optionally preceded by *il* for emphasis), compare:

Bilin (R)	<i>an (kūt) ikaḷuyūn+kā</i>	('I (thee-Acc.) loved+thee')
Xamir	<i>an kūt eqanūn</i>	('I thee-Acc. loved')
Awngi	<i>ān kowa ənkanūyā</i>	('I thee-Acc. loved')
	'I loved you'	

where Bilin has an optional *kūt* 'thee-Acc.', but *-kā* is obligatory. This set of suffixes falls into the North-Ethio-Semitic pattern so perfectly that it has to be a borrowing.

In Awngi, the archaic "religious optative" form has a limited set of suffix pronouns to mark the person of the beneficiary 'for you...', Sg.2m. *-y*, 2f. *-ḡ*, 3m. *-ya*, 3f. *-ḡa*, Pl.2. *-yana* (Hetzron 1969:34) (4.2.3.2.). This is the only case where second person has gender distinction in Awngi. An intricate system of limited person-marking for the beneficiary is found in the

Awngi predestinative (4.2.3.2. and Hetzron 1969, 1.4.1.), an element -c- for second person only if the subject is in the first person, furthermore the same -c- in the imperative (only!) for the first person beneficiary only if the subject is in the second person, e.g. *desayē* 'I study for him,' but *desaycē* 'I study for you (sg. or pl.)', and *destay* 'study for him!', but *destayc* 'study for me!'.

#### 4.2.2.2. DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

These contain an element *n* almost everywhere. Table 2 lists the pronouns:

Table 2. DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

		Bilin	Xamir	Xamta	Kemant	Quara	Awngi
'this'	m.	<i>nīn</i>	<i>ien</i>	<i>ānīl</i>	<i>ōn</i>	<i>ən</i>	<i>ōnn</i>
	f.	<i>nēni</i>	<i>ien(ǰän)</i>	<i>ānič</i>			<i>ōnnā</i>
'these'	m.	<i>nēn</i>	<i>ien(zāy)</i>	<i>āḡūt</i>	<i>ōndiw</i>	<i>enzō</i>	<i>ōnnī</i>
	f.			<i>ḡet</i>			
'that'	m.	<i>ənǰa(dīn)</i>	<i>ied</i>	<i>ḡā</i>	<i>īn</i>	<i>yīn</i>	<i>ān</i>
	f.	<i>ənǰa(dēni)</i>	<i>iež(žān)</i>	<i>ḡet</i>			<i>anā</i>
'those'	m.	<i>ənǰa(dēn)</i>	<i>ez(zāy)</i>	<i>ḡāt</i>	<i>īndiw</i>	<i>yīnzō</i>	<i>annī</i>
	f.			<i>ḡān</i>			

The forms given in Table 2 are those used with nouns. Of comparative interest is the Awngi presentative pronoun (~French *voici, voilà*):

Table 3. PRESENTATIVE PRONOUNS OF AWNGI

	Close	Distant
masc.	<i>ōnnīku</i>	<i>annīku</i>
fem.	<i>ōnnīti</i>	<i>annīti</i>
pl.	<i>ōnnīkoni</i>	<i>annīkoni</i>

These show the general Cushitic determiners masc. -*ku*, fem. -*ti*, otherwise unattested in Agaw.

For definiteness and articles, see 4.3.5.

#### 4.2.3. VERBS

Like everywhere in Cushitic, the Agaw verbal system displays an impressive array of paradigms. These languages have no sentence-connecting (conjoining, subordinating) particles. Conjoining and subordination are entirely expressed by the verbal morphology. Sharp formal distinction is made between main and subordinate verbs. In this outline, it is impossible even to list the whole variety of forms. The following is meant to give a general idea of the system.

##### 4.2.3.1. PERSON, GENDER AND NUMBER-MARKING (illustrated on main verbs only)

###### 4.2.3.1.1. Prefix-conjugation

The original Cushitic conjugation was based on prefixes, with further suffixes in Pl.2/3. The reconstructible pattern is: Sg.1c. ?- (4.1.4.2.), 2m./f. (no gender-distinction reconstructible,



see Hetzron *forthcoming*, 2, fn. 3) *t-*, 3m. *y-*, 3f. *t-*; Pl.1c. *n-*, 2. *t-...-n*, 3. *y-...-n*. Only Beja, Saho, Somali, Dasenech, Awngi, and partly Xamta, have preserved such prefix-conjugations for part of the verbs. At some point of its history, Agaw introduced an innovation,—it added a suffix *-n-* (different from the *-n* of Pl.2/3.) to Pl.1c.<sup>38</sup>

Evidence to be mentioned below suggests that this may have triggered further developments—the dropping of the initial *n-* (making the prefix-portion identical with that of Sg.1c.) in Awngi, or maintaining the *n-*, but adding the final *n* also to the Sg.1c. (according to the testimony of Bilin and Xamir suffixes) (4.2.3.1.2.2.).

As mentioned, of the Agaw languages only Xamta and Awngi have preserved the prefix-conjugation (cf. 1.2. above). In the latter, only five verbs have it: *-nt-* 'come', *ag-* 'bring', *yīg-* 'remain', *yaγ-* 'be(come)', and *āq-* 'know'. Table 4 shows the indefinite nonpast of the verb 'come'.

Table 4. AWNGI PREFIX-CONJUGATION

	singular	plural
1.	<i>āntē</i>	<i>āntnē</i>
2.	<i>tīntē</i>	<i>tīntānā</i>
3.	masc. <i>yīntē</i> fem. <i>tīntē</i>	<i>yīntānā</i>

Conti Rossini (1904:200[18]) provides the following data on the Xamta prefix-conjugation (with no indication of limitation to certain verbs), for *šaw* 'do': Pl.1c. *enšāwīr* (cf. Sg.1c. *šawīr*), and the alternating forms *šawnīt* or *tešawnīt* for Sg.2c. and *šawenū* or *yšawenū* for Sg.3(m?). We have thus optional *t-* for Sg.2., optional *y-* for Sg.3., and obligatory *en-* for Pl.1c.

#### 4.2.3.1.2. Suffix-conjugations

For the other verbs in Awngi and for all the verbs in all the other Agaw languages, auxiliaries conjugated by means of the above prefixes became suffixes attached to a verbal stem (Praetorius 1894, Plazikowsky-Brauner 1957). One such old auxiliary-to-become-a-suffix can be identified with the root *y-* 'say' (see 4.2.3.6.) still attested in most languages, yielding the indefinite conjugation in Awngi. Another auxiliary is *k/γ* 'to be', the basis for the definite conjugations of Awngi (the past at least, see 4.2.3.1.2.3.) and for the only set of conjugations in the other Agaw idioms. Table 5 is a comparative table of verbal suffixes in the relatively most neutral verb class in Agaw. For devoicing of Awngi Sg.1c., see 4.1.4.2. In order to show all the variation attested, for the past tense the set of suffixes given by Plazikowsky-Brauner for Xamir (after *kāl-*, see fn. 22) is presented under the heading 'Lasta'. For Falasha, past tense suffixes given both by Plazikowsky-Brauner and Halévy are presented between conjugated forms in the Bilin-Falasha comparative table (161) and the grammar (170). I am presenting here the latter. Halévy also indicates the existence of a colloquial simplified conjugation of the past tense in Falasha, where there is one form for all of the singular ending in *-(e)oy* and one for all of the plural: *-n(e)oy*. For Xamir, Reinisch 1884 has *-uk* where Reinisch 1909:2 gives *-kū*. I transcribe here *-k"*. In Quara second persons, the first forms with *y/i* are used with most verbs, the second ones with *t-* with a handful of verbs only (*ənt-* 'come', *y-* 'say', etc.), see 4.2.3.1.2.1. below.

<sup>38</sup>Something analogous happened in Somali. In the present general of two of the prefix-conjugated verbs: *daah* 'say' and *maad* 'come', all persons but Pl.1c. have a *d* after the stem, but for Pl.1c. there is *n*, e.g. *yīdaah-d-aa* 'he says' vs. *nīdaah-n-aa* 'we say'. The origin of *d* is obscure and it is not characteristic of a given person, but *n* is definitely a person-marker like the prefix *n-* itself. The reason for this double-marking is unclear. Note that the *tt*-group of Ethiopian Semitic languages also adopted such a double marking in the Pl.1c.: *nəsābər-nā* 'we break' (mere *nəsābər* elsewhere), doubtless under Cushitic influence.

Table 5. AGAW VERBAL SUFFIXES

	Bilin	Xamir ~ Lasta (R)	Xamta	Kemant	Quara (R)	~	Falasha (H)	(PB)	Awngi def.	indef.
<b>PAST</b>										
Sg.1.	-x'ən	-ūn	-ūn	-ōy'	-ū		-ywn	-oy	-y'ā	-a
2.	-həx'	-nū	-iyū	-yōy'	-iū/-tū		-iy	-iōy <sup>39</sup>	-tōy'ā	-ta
3m.	-əx'	-ū	-ū	-ōy'	-ākū		-oy	-ōy	-y'ā	-a
3f.	-ti	-ic	-ic	-ti	-(i)ti		-ēti	-iti <sup>39</sup>	-tōy'ā	-ta
<b>NONPAST</b>										
Pl.1.	-nəx'ən	-nūn	-ēn	-nōy'	-nū		-nuywn	-nōy	-nōy'ā	-na
2.	-dənəx	-nū	-nēn	-inōy'	-inū/-tenū		-inuy	-inoy <sup>39</sup>	-tūnā	-tōka
3.	-nək'	-u	-lən	-nōy'	-(i)nū		-nuy	-ēnoy	-ūnā	-ka
<b>NONPAST</b>										
Sg.1.	-āk'ən	-ākūn	-ir	-ōk'	-ākū				-āyā	-ē
2.	-nāk'	-nak'	(te-)...-nit	-yōk'	-yākū/-tākū				-tāyā	-tē
3m.	-āk'	-ak'	(y-)...-ēnū	-ōk'	-ākū				-āwī	-ē
3f.	-āti	-äc	?	-āti	-ätī				-tātī	-tē
Pl.1.	-nāk'ən	-nakūn	en-...-ir	-nōk'	-nākū				-nāyā	-nē
2.	-dānāk'	-fnak'	-nēn	-inōk' <sup>40</sup>	-yākūn/-tākūn				-tāyā	-tānā
3.	-nāk'	-nak'	-nū	-ōk'ən	-ākūn				-ānk'ī	-ānā

<sup>39</sup>Plazikowsky-Brauner indicates gemination of the last consonant of the verb in Sg./Pl.2. and Sg.3f., preceding the *i*. I am not sure if this has to be trusted. For Awngi, she also gives similar gemination: Pl.2. *kālīka* 'you have been able', Pl.3. *kālīka* 'they have been able' for what I recorded as *kālīka* and *kaleka* respectively.

<sup>40</sup>Conti Rossini gives here *-yākūn* like in Quara.

## 4.2.3.1.2.1. Some Verb-classes

In the Bet Tarqe division of Bilin, there are three verb-classes: those having suffixes as indicated above, those with an *i* inserted in the middle of the suffix in all the persons of the past, and those with such *i* in some persons only, e.g. (R) *wās+ṛux* 'you (sg.) heard' vs. *is+ṛūux* 'you (sg.) did', and the corresponding plurals *wās+dinux* vs. *is+dinūux*. Palmer, on the other hand, represented this as a vowel harmony: *gāb+ṛax* 'you (sg.) refused', vs. *ǰāb+ṛix* 'you (sg.) bought', and the plurals *gāb+dənāx* vs. *ǰāb+dinīx* (4.1.4.4.).

In Awngi, a small number of verbs have different tones according to the person: High in the third persons and Pl.1c. and Mid elsewhere: *ayē* 'I give' vs. *āyē* 'he gives'. The above suffixes may be slightly modified if the verb-stem is marked to exert a Raising or Lowering tonal effect (4.1.3.) in various persons in different combinations (Hetzron 1969:39-40, 'Groups'), e.g. *γ\*+ē* → *γ\*ē* 'he eats', but *γ\*+ē* → *γ\*e* 'I eat'.

It was mentioned above (4.0.2.) that Bilin and Xamir have *t* → *ɾ* changes, while elsewhere one finds *t* → *y*. In second person suffixes, originally starting in *t*, one finds *ɾ* in the singular in Bilin, but in both numbers in Xamir. The second type of change, into *y*, is attested in the past singular in Xamta and for both numbers in Kemant. In Quara, *t* → *y* took place in most cases (the first variant in the Table), but a few verbs still preserved *t* (the second variants). In Awngi the norm is preservation of the *t* in the second persons (and Sg.3f.), but a fairly significant number of verbs, all the verbs ending in *t* or *c* (cf. Matthews 1971: 150), most of the verbs ending in *i*, and a few more where no conditioning can be found (*ənjk*- 'sit', *zəq*- 'drink', *tamb*- 'arrive') have a palatal initial instead of the *t*, e.g. *des+tānā* 'you (pl.) study', but *qūc+ēnā* 'you (pl.) wash', *tamb+enā* 'you (pl.) arrive' (note the lowering effect on *e* here).

## 4.2.3.1.2.2. Some Suffixes

Note that the Sg.1c. suffixes of Bilin, Xamir, and in the past only in Xamta and Halēvy's Falasha, contain a final *-n* which may have been analogically taken over from Pl.1c. which is, in turn, characterized in Bilin, Xamir and Falasha (H) by the pattern *n*...*-n* (4.2.3.1.1. with fn. 38). In all the other languages, on the other hand, Pl.1c. has only an initial *n*....

The endings of the Xamta nonpast are curious and deviating from the rest. One might risk the hypothesis that they are remains of an auxiliary 'there is' (*wan?*) like in Amharic (*allā*), originally appended to a prefix-conjugation. Note that Sg.1c. and Pl.1c. end in the same *-ɪɾ* (like the *-n* just mentioned).

There are, naturally, further problems with the above forms. The plural-markers *-ka* in the indefinite past of Awngi (*-ka* is usually an adnominal plural-marker), the *ɲ* of Xamir Pl.3. (influenced by the pronouns? 4.2.2.1.), the *l* (<*n*?) of Xamta Pl.3. are all enigmatic. The past of Lasta Xamir (PB) seems to be some kind of conjugated auxiliary also. The most interesting questions, however, may be asked concerning the element *k*\*/*x*\*/*γ*\* found in conjugations all over, claimed to be a descendant of the auxiliary 'be'.

4.2.3.1.2.3. The Element *k*\*/*x*\*/*γ*\*

For the definite nonpast of Awngi, D. Cohen (1972:61) suggested that the element *-yā* (in the nonthird persons) does not come from the auxiliary (*y*)*ay*- 'be', but is originally the Cushitic masculine determiner *-ku* (end of 4.2.2.2., Table 3), followed by an element *-a*, thus *\*ku+a* → *\*yua* → *-yā*. His two main arguments are that in Pl.2. we have *-tānyā* where the plural-marker *n* PRECEDES the *γ*, instead of following it as in the actual verbal form *tāyānā* 'you (pl.) are/become', and that the third person forms contain no *γ* at all, but an element



known as a feminine determiner *-tī* in Sg.3f. (4.2.2.2., Table 3) and a *-k'* in Pl.3.<sup>41</sup> One may add one more argument in favour of Cohen's hypothesis. In the negative forms of the definite nonpast (4.2.3.4.) the negative particle *tī* may even appear between the person-marker and *-yā*, e.g. *des+nā+tī+n+yā* 'we do not study' ('base+Pl.1c.+Neg.+secondPl.1c.+yā'). Cohen is sceptical even about the auxiliary origin of the definite past tense endings of Awngi and prefers to see in them also a combination of a base *dese*+determiner+*a*.

Let us first deal with the element *k'/x'/γ'* in the other languages. It would follow from Cohen's suggestion that these are also originally determiners. Yet there are several arguments against this. One of them is that while verbs of being are known to become verbal suffixes in Cushitic (e.g. Somali progressive forms, *\*unaya* 'I am eating' in most dialects, but *\*ūna+hāya* in Darod, still showing the auxiliary *hay* 'be'), there is no known instance of, nor any rationale for, an adnominal determiner becoming a verbal augment. Secondly, in the Sg.1c. forms of Bilin, Xamir, past tense Xamta and Falasha (H), as well as in the corresponding Pl.1c. forms (in the same distribution), an element *n* follows the *k'/x'/γ'*. This can be explained through the developments of the prefix-conjugations most conveniently (4.2.3.1.1.). More importantly, in Quara and Kemant nonpast Pl.2/3 (both persons in Kemant by CR, only Pl.3. in Sasse's material) the plural-marker *-n* is still AFTER the *k'*: Pl.2. *-tākūn/-yākūn*, Pl.3. *-ākūn/-ōk' n*, as against Bilin Pl.2. *-dānāk'*, Pl.3. *-nāk'*, etc.<sup>42</sup> If we assume, as we must, that one of these types is archaic and the other innovated, it is more plausible to consider the final *-n* which appears there in some cases only, quite unsystematically (cf. esp. Kemant (by Sasse) Pl.2. *-inōk'* with *n-k'*, but Pl.3. *-ōk' n* with *k'-n*) a survival of an older situation, while the overwhelming final position of *-k'/x'/γ'*, quite natural for Sg.2/3m./f. which were never followed by suffixes in the prefix-conjugation, must result from a regularizing tendency. This makes more sense than saying that the final position for *k'/x'/γ'* is original also in Pl.2/3. and the first persons, and an originally preceding plural-marker *n* was in some rare cases, unsystematically and with no apparent reason, transferred to the final position. Unsystematic distribution is often a symptom of archaism. Thirdly, note the alternation *x'* or *γ'/k'* between past/nonpast in Bilin, Kemant and Quara. With an original final position and determiner status this would be hard to explain. If one conjectures, on the other hand, that this alternation results from the tense-forms of the root for 'be', one obtains a simple solution which perfectly fits into what we know about this verb. In Bilin, the verb 'be' presents two shapes *āx* and *ak*, where the first one is a morphological past tense form and the second is morphologically nonpast.<sup>43</sup>

The best conclusion thus seems to be the following. The suffixes of the Agaw verb do come from a conjugated auxiliary *ax/ak* 'be(come)', but the stem-consonant tended to be transferred to the final position, as a trend for uniformity. The labial appendix added may reflect a more archaic shape of the verb 'be', *\*aku*, or it may have originally been a past-tense marker (there is independent evidence for past tense in *u*, see 4.2.3.2.) and was later analogically

<sup>41</sup>Cohen wonders whether Sg.3m. *-āwī* represents older *\*-āy'ī*. In fact, Conti Rossini (1905:132 [30]) does signal both forms in free variation. For that matter, the masculine genitive ending *-w* also comes from an older *\*γ'*. This is supported by comparative evidence (Bilin *-x'*, Kemant *-γ'*) and also by an archaism within Awngi itself. In the numerals *lāyū* 'one' (used only in counting), the element *-yū* is of genitival origin according to the testimony of Bilin (R) *lā+ux/lā+rī*, Xamir *la+ū/la+y*, Quara *lā+γū/lā+y* for 'one (masc./fem.)'. In these languages, 'one' is genitively connected with the subsequent noun, 'one house' being 'a house of one'.

<sup>42</sup>The Xamir past tense, both in Reinisch's and Plazikowsky-Brauner's presentation, is hard to explain at this stage. It is impossible to make reasonable conjectures without absolutely reliable synchronic data.

<sup>43</sup>These statements are carefully worded because of the existence of the phenomenon of "reversal of aspects" in this language, see Palmer 1965 and 4.2.3.6. below.

transferred to the nonpast auxiliary (though not in the independent verb 'be'). Only one form has not been taken care of by this explanation: the Sg.3f. *-ti/č*.<sup>44</sup>

If the above hypothesis is accepted, one can see that the Awngi definite past tense endings reflect the original prefix-conjugation of 'be' in its purest form (except for the dropping of *γ* in Pl.2/3.). Let us turn now to the definite nonpast of Awngi, upon which Cohen's objections were originally based. This form is absolutely homonymous with the paradigm of the SUBJECTAL RELATIVE NONPAST (4.2.3.3.3.). In Xamir (Reinisch 1884, I, §158, 159.2) and Falasha (Halévy 1873:169), the subjectal relative forms may be used as main verbs with the meaning of a "durative present" ('who does' used as 'is doing'). It would thus be quite reasonable to assume that the Awngi definite nonpast was actually borrowed from the relative conjugation and its shape is to be explained by the relative.

In such relative forms, a distinction should be made between third and nonthird persons. In addition to the regular subject-marking characteristic of all finite verbal forms, third person subjectal relatives also show agreement in gender and number with the headnoun, by means of the same suffixes as the genitive (4.2.1.2.2.2. and 4.2.3.3.3.).<sup>45</sup> The identity of the Awngi definite nonpast third person endings with the genitive was already noted by Pott (1869:492). Thus, Cohen is right in analyzing the endings of the third person as originally nonverbal, gender and number-marking particles, but the framework is different,—these are genitival constructions. On the other hand, nonthird persons have special status. Most often they are not followed by any headnoun, and constitute the final element of the phrase in which they appear:

Bilin (R) *yi+līd sūrō aḡāyer fārī*

Xamir *yi+tīs suḡūr windār fīt*

('me+from you-having-stolen you-who-are go-away')  
'You who are those who have robbed me, go away!'<sup>46</sup>

Therefore, one finds a special element at the end of these nonthird person forms, *-xər* (R: *-yer*) in Bilin, *-r* after the singular and *-k* after the plural (but *-ker* after a negative Sg.1c.)

<sup>44</sup>Since the Awngi definite past has no *-ti* (but a more regular *-tāγ̃ā*), this *-ti/č* may be an innovation of all the branches other than Awngi. As far as we know, Agaw makes so little use of the general Cushitic determiner *-ku/-ti* (Table 3) that our verbal ending *-ti* could hardly be attributed to its analogical influence. Another possibility is to see in it an analogical development on the basis of the genitive and relative (4.2.1.2.2. and 4.2.3.3.3.). Sg.3f. is the only truly gender-marked person in the paradigm, the only real feminine. Now, in genitival constructions *-x* is a masculine and *-ti* (→ *-ri/-y*) is a feminine. It is then possible that the etymologically different verbal ending *-x* was identified with the masculine genitive *-x*, and *-ti* was introduced for the feminine accordingly. Yet, the feminine genitive *-ti* became *-ri* and *-y* in various languages whereas the verbal ending for Sg.3f. remained *-ti* or was palatalized to *-č*. This discrepancy can be explained by the fact that the verbal ending occurs in clause-final or even absolute sentence-final position, while the genitive suffix is most often not final, but precedes another noun.

<sup>45</sup>Thus, Sg.3f. Bilin *gäbräri*, Xamir *qidsräy*, Awngi *destātī* have two elements in agreement with the same noun: *-r(ä)/-r(ä)/-t(ä)*—that signals a Sg.3f. subject (also in all other paradigms), and *-ri/-y/-ti* in agreement with a feminine singular headnoun. In subjectal relatives the subject and the headnoun coincide.

<sup>46</sup>In English, nonthird person subjectal relatives have the subject pronoun as headnoun: 'you who are', but in the fully conjugated Agaw verbal forms this is not so.

in Xamir, *-n* after the singular and *-y* after the plural in Quara, and *-yā* in Awngi.<sup>47</sup> This element may come from a particle that had something to do with the syntactic position of the nonthird person relative. The best comparison with a particle actually attested was offered by Reinisch (1882:118-9). Bilin has a particle *-yer* (= *-xən*) which has, among other functions, a topicalizing one (4.3.5.), being put after an element that represents a link with the preceding context having been mentioned before, e.g. Bilin (R) *birā+yer kāya sānuk* (Genesis 1.2) 'And the earth was empty' (i.e. 'as to the earth', where the earth is what the preceding sentence has introduced as a topic and is taken up here again.). Relative clauses also often refer to earlier established facts. The above Bilin/Xamir example does not COMMUNICATE the stealing, it only recalls it. Hence the possibility of marking relatives with such a particle.<sup>48</sup> It is then possible that this particle was "grammaticalized," i.e. made obligatory thereby losing its independent meaning, when the relative verb was phrase-final, i.e. before a minor pause.

Xamir *n* and *k* may be a survival of either segment of *\*ker*. For Awngi, there are two possibilities. The element *yā* may come from the referential article *-kā* (4.3.5.) which is still a quasi-obligatory constituent of the construction that provides most of the uses for the non-third person subjunctive relative, —the cleft construction (4.3.3.), e.g. *destānyā(+kā) ɛntōji* ('who-study-Pl.2.(+Art.) you(pl.)') 'It is you (pl.) who study'.<sup>49</sup> The other possibility, less probable, is that *-yā* comes from *\*-ker* with loss of final *n*.<sup>50</sup>

Note that if the Awngi definite nonpast is originally a relative form, we have no Awngi paradigm that etymologically corresponds to the pan-Agaw nonpast in *k*.

#### 4.2.3.2. TENSES, MOODS, ASPECTS (in main verbs)

Main verbs are those capable of appearing in absolute final position (since subordinate clauses precede main clauses, 4.3.1.2.). Awngi distinguishes between two ASPECTS: Indefinite for actions either imprecisely situated in time and space, or connected with the present (like a present perfect), and a Definite one for neutral expression. Anteriority of an action or event with relation to the subsequent one (~ 'already') is expressed by the auxiliary *yas-* ('to have/take with oneself' as an independent verb). Durative past is marked by a conjugated auxiliary *ɛs-i-* 'pass the day, be'. Furthermore, the subjective relation between the subject and the action may be expressed by either an Exobligative suffix *-wǝ-* which either expresses the reluctance of the subject in performing the action or that the action is performed to the last detail, e.g. *desē* 'he studies', but *desawǝ* 'he studies unwillingly' or 'he studies all there is to be studied', or a Predestinative (~ Ethical Dative) *-y(c)-* which usually expresses in whose favour the action is performed: *desayē* 'he studies for somebody' (i.e. his studying will benefit someone else). In the predestinative form, a limited person-marking for the beneficiary is found (4.2.2.1.): *ān desaycē* 'I study for you (sg./pl.)' vs. *ān desayē* 'I study for him/them'. No aspect has been signalled in the other languages.

<sup>47</sup>The genitival third person endings and the nonthird ones under discussion naturally appear after both tenses, e.g. Awngi *destān+yā* 'you (pl.) who study', *destūn+yā* 'you (pl.) who studied'.

<sup>48</sup>Like the Amharic *-mm-* in the relative nonpast, cf. Hetzron 1973.

<sup>49</sup>Thus, there is here a *yā* coming from *-kā* which has lost its independent meaning, hence it is reused in its original form *-kā*.

<sup>50</sup>This was Reinisch's opinion (1887, II.158), *-ya* from *-yar*. In his 1909 book (19) he is even reinterpreting, in a cavalier manner, Conti Rossini's transcription (1905:127) *-yāx* as *-yar*, without knowing that this is nothing but *-yā+y*, the ending plus an emphatic particle (4.3.3.). Note further that Bilin (R) has a particle *-ya* 'but' which is even more similar to the Awngi ending.

Bilin and Xamir have a three-TENSE system: past, present and future, elsewhere there are only past and nonpast (= present-future). Plazikowsky-Brauner also mentions a near future for Xamir (Lasta). The future is formed out of the past tense stem by means of suffixes (Bilin/Xamir Sg.1c. -*ni/-ñir*, 2c. -*ta/-tā* (PB -*ter*, R 1909 -*tir*), 3m. -*na/-tū*, 3f. *tāri* (P) or -*tā* (R)/-*tī*, Pl.1c. -*na/-nā*, 2c. -*tana/-tinā*, 3c. -*dāna/-ñtak*").

For the general exponents of the past/nonpast opposition in Agaw, we can say the following. In four out of the five prefix-conjugated verbs of Awngi, High tone is used for the nonpast and Mid for the past. In the suffixes, the past/nonpast opposition may be reduced to *a/ē* for the Awngi indefinite aspect, *əy*" or *əx*"/*āk*" in the other tongues (i.e. closed/open vowel, continuant/stop). Awngi even suggests *u/ā* (Hetzron 1969:72)<sup>51</sup> as a possible archaic opposition. Here both vocalic timbre: closed vs. open vowel, and tone Mid vs. High are involved. This latter opposition: past -*u*-, nonpast -*ā*- seems to be a good summary of the different clues found. This is reminiscent of Semitic systems such as Akkadian where the most common paradigm (with no special thematic vowel) has the following pattern (Sg.3m.) past: 'Prefix+C<sub>1</sub>C<sub>2</sub>uC<sub>3</sub>' (e.g. *ikšud* 'he conquered') with -*u*-, and nonpast 'Prefix+C<sub>1</sub>aC<sub>2</sub>C<sub>3</sub>aC<sub>3</sub>' (e.g. *ikaššad* 'he conqueres') with -*a-a*-. The correspondence, Agaw *u/ā* and Akkadian *u/a-ā* (High tone vs. dual occurrence of a vowel in the nonpast) is striking.

In main verb positions, in addition to the indicative, one also finds an imperative MOOD, usually a short form for second persons and longer ones (= jussive) for the rest. The jussive ends in -*s* (dative) in Awngi, and usually in -*n* elsewhere. Awngi further has a desiderative ('I wish'), an archaic religious optative form for blessings, with residual suffixes for the expression of the person of the beneficiary, e.g. *dəbān əy+m+əy/əy+m+ōš/əy+m+ɣana* 'May God give you (masc./fem./pl.)', the usual expression for 'thank you'.

Finally, there are special forms for the unreal apodosis (the 'then-clause' in a hypothetical CONDITIONAL construction). Reinisch (1882 §92) further mentions an "elective conditional" for Bilin. In constructions with such a conditional, there is no protasis ('if-clause'). The sentence announces a possibility, what COULD be, followed by an explanation why it is not so, why the option offered by the conditional is not taken, e.g. Bilin (R) *inā gurū yī gānzān, āʔdinā šāqāu gīn, aṇā fiduyūn+ilom* 'These people would be my slaves, but I released them' ('these people my slaves they-would-be that-they-have is, but-I I-released+them').

#### 4.2.3.3. SUBORDINATE VERBS

These constitute a very large inventory, since, as already pointed out, Agaw has no sentence-connecting particles, so that conjoining and subordination is handled by verbal morphology. Let me deal here only with the principal subordinate forms.

##### 4.2.3.3.1. Converb

This form merely expresses coordination with the subsequent sentence. It is marked for the person, number and gender of its subject, but it has the same implicit tense, aspect, mood or type of subordination as the verb of the subsequent sentence, e.g. Awngi *ənjk" amā kantē/kantɣ"ā/ kantōs/kantānī* 'he sits down and looks/he sat down and looked/let him sit down and look/when he sat down and looked', where the same Sg.3m. converb of *ənjk*" - 'sit down' is interpreted as an indefinite present/definite past/jussive/temporal, according to the shape of the governing verb *kant*- 'look'. Inadequate descriptions make it somewhat difficult to

<sup>51</sup>For the vocalic opposition, compare *destāt* 'who studies' and *destūt* 'who studied'. For both vocalic and tonal oppositions, Awngi has *tamb+u+ta* 'as soon as he arrived' to which there corresponds Amharic *əndä+därräsä* with a past tense form of the verb, and *tamb+ā+ta* 'so that he may arrive', in Amharic *ənd+idärs* with a nonpast. When the Amharic form was calqued on Agaw, the *u* was rendered by a past tense and *ā* by a nonpast.

describe the converb system of the other languages, but their existence makes no doubt. It seems that in the older descriptions two forms qualify for it, what has been called "participle,"<sup>52</sup> and the so-called "perfectum subordinatum." The first one ends in *-o* in Kemant and Quara (*wās+ō* Sg.3m. form of 'hear'), Bilin *-o* or *-e* according to the verb class (4.2.3.1.2.1.): *gābo* 'having refused', *ḵābē* 'having bought' (Sg.3m. forms), and zero-ending in Xamir: *qīdīs* 'having sanctified'. Halévy (1873:171) gives a converb form for Falasha with zero ending. The "perfectum subordinatum" has an ending *-ēk* in Bilin: *gābēk* 'he refused and' (Palmer's translation), *-ā* in Xamir: *qīdsā* for Sg.3m. 'sanctify', and *-ā* in Quara (*wās+ā* from 'hear'). Tucker and Bryan (1966:549) list the first set ("participle") as converbs. The only clear statement about this is Sasse's (private communication), he says that Kemant *wās'o* (~ "participle") and *was(ə)* (both Sg.3m. converbs from 'hear') are functionally equivalent.

Let us mention that Bilin (R) also allows a type of verb-conjoining, with a particle *-yer* after the second one, *gānjā ḵīynā+yer* 'sleep and rest as well' (pl.).

#### 4.2.3.3.2. Miscellaneous Subordinate Forms

One may mention the SUBJUNCTIVE 'in order that', the TEMPORAL 'when', the STATIVE (R: Synchronos) 'while', the PROTASIS (the 'if-form' of conditional constructions). Bilin distinguishes between a REAL protasis (ending in *-än*) 'if I do', and an UNREAL (hypothetical) protasis (R: Optative) in *-dik* (R: *-dōlik*, *-dok*) 'if I did [but I didn't]'. In Xamir, the real protasis ends in *-än* or *-š*, the unreal one is formed by means of the auxiliary *wīn* 'there is' + *-än*. In Awngi, the protasis ends in *-ūni*, and only the form of the apodosis (regular indicative or special apodosis form) shows whether it is real or not: *ān desūni ṁncye yēgcē* 'If I study, I shall find work', vs. *ān desūni ṁncye yēgcēšīy'ā* 'If I studied, I would find work'. Awngi further has special types of protases for refined expressions: ABSURD CONDITIONAL where assuming the truth of the content of the protasis is absurd, as proven by the apodosis: *ān desūnisā ṁncye yēgcēšīy'ā* 'If I had studied, I would find work' (implying: isn't my joblessness proof enough of my lack of education?), —INCREDULOUS CONDITIONAL where the non-truth of the apodosis is the reason for doubting the truth of the protasis: *ḵi desānisā ṁncye yēgcālamašīy'* 'If he had [really] studied, wouldn't he find work?' (implying that the joblessness of the person mentioned makes the speaker doubt about possible early statements about his education), and a DESIDERATIVE CONDITIONAL: *ān desagīgu ṁncye yēgcēšīy'ā* 'If only I studied, I would find work'.

Another form worth mentioning is the "QUOTATIVE" (R: Objectsmodus), for the verbs of clauses governed by a verb 'to say/know, etc.'. In Bilin and Awngi, relative forms followed by an accusative ending (*-t* and *-sa* respectively) are used. in Xamir either *-t* (accusative) or *-ḵa* ('as, like').

#### 4.2.3.3.3. The Relative

The most interesting subordinate form is the relative, the form of the verb in a clause that qualifies a noun, to be called "headnoun" (~"antecedent" in traditional terminology). It usually has two tenses, past and nonpast, but only one in Xamir and Kemant. The latter makes no tense-distinction at all in the relative, the former uses converb + relative auxiliary *wīn* for the expression of the past.

<sup>52</sup>This is a typical translation-oriented nomenclature rendering the pseudo-literal translation of the form into European languages, rather than recognizing its true function within Agaw. The same is true for the use of the term "gerund" (French "gérondif") in Ethiopian Semitic, inspired by the "petit nègre" translation "en faisant" rather than by an analysis of its true function.



A distinction should be made between a SUBJECTAL RELATIVE (Rel. I) where the headnoun is the subject of the relative clause, Awngi *destātī yuna* 'the woman who studies', and a COMPLEMENTAL RELATIVE (oblique relative, Rel. II) where the headnoun is a complement in the relative clause, Awngi *destāw mecaḥ* 'the book that she studies', *destāw ḡḡn* 'the house in which he studies'. For the shape of the subjectal relative, see 4.2.3.1.2.3. above. Third person forms have genitival endings agreeing with the headnoun in gender and number, and nonthirdpersons end in *-xər* in Bilin; *-r* in the singular in Xamir and Quara, *-k* in the plural in Xamir and *-y* in Quara; and *-yā* in Awngi. For complemental relative, Bilin has two sets, one showing AGREEMENT in number and gender with its headnoun by means of the AGREEING GENITIVE endings (4.2.1.2.2.2.) (*-x"/-ri/-w* for masc./fem./pl.), where the relative clause follows the noun, and one ending in *-a*, where the relative verb directly precedes its headnoun. Examples: (R) *āquā ja agnāyū+l lābdīrūyū+nā* ('water we-do-not-drink-Masc.Gen.+to you-led+us') or *ja agnā āquā+l lābdīrūyū+nā* ('we-do-not-drink-Rel.-a water+to you-led+us') for 'You led us to water that we do not drink'. Note that Reinisch also gives examples where relatives with the genitival ending precede the headnoun. In Xamir, short relatives ending in *-a* and directly preceding the headnoun are used with a masculine singular headnoun only. Genitival relative may either precede or follow the headnoun (the agreement elements being *-āū~ō/-rāy~rē/-auk*), e.g. *ien kūt iedīl qāldāuk gīlkū+n* ('those you (sg.) there you-see-Pl.Gen. men+those') 'those men whom you see there' (relative preceding) and *xūrā kūt qāūs ieqanīr wīndrē+zān* ('child you (sg.) once you-loved-Converb you-used-to-Fem.Gen.+Fem.demonstrative') 'the girl whom you once used to love' (relative following). In Quara the situation is unclear (masc. *-ā*, fem. *-ē*, relative either preceding or following, cf. 4.2.1.2.). In Kemant, relative clauses precede their headnouns and agree with them (*-y"* (*-y* after *a*)/*-y/-w*), e.g. *xalnāy x"əra* 'the boy we see/saw', *xalnāy x"əra* 'the girl we see/saw', *xalnāw x"ər* 'the children we see/saw'. In Awngi, the relative precedes the headnoun and agrees with it (*-u/-t/-k*), e.g. *kantāw ḡḡn* 'the house which I see', *kantāt ḡḡnā* 'the small house (fem.) that I see', *kantāk" ḡḡnkā* 'the houses which I see'. See further 4.3.2.2. and 4.3.2.3. for case-agreement and case-marking.

By definition, three forms of the subjectal and complemental relative are homonymous: Subj. Sg.3m. = Masc.Compl.Sg.3m., Subj.Sg.3f. = Fem.Compl.Sg.3f., and Subj.Pl.3. = Pl.Compl.Pl.3. This follows from the fact (fn. 45) that third person subjectal relatives and all complemental relatives (with the exceptions of those ending in *-a* in Bilin) show agreement with their headnouns in addition to the regular person-marking referring to the subject. In subjectal relatives, the subject and the headnoun are the same. In complemental relatives, on the other hand, if, for example, the subject is Sg.3f. and the complement-headnoun a feminine singular, one ends up with the same form as the subjectal Sg.3f. where the feminine agreement element is dictated by the subject. In Awngi *destāt(ī) yuna* 'the woman who studies', subjectal, if the verb is a feminine the genitival agreement also has to be a feminine, and in *yuna destāt(ī) mecaḥa* 'the booklet (fem.) that the woman studies', complemental, the two feminines are coincidental.

#### 4.2.3.4. NEGATION

This is entirely a matter of verbal morphology (Plazikowsky-Brauner 1957:21-8). Negative markers appear inside the verbal word, either right after the stem and preceding all the other suffixes, or after some person-marker but preceding tense-, mood- and subordination-markers. The latter may have a shape different from their counterparts in affirmative verbs. The following negative-markers may be isolated within the verbal word (note the great homogeneity between languages):

A. *-la*, used everywhere except in Xamir for the negation of main indicative verbs (indefinite nonpast only in Awngi). It is not followed by any further suffix, but it may be slightly modified for person-marking: Bilin and Quara have *-li* in Sg.1c., Quara also in Pl.1c., Bilin also in Pl.1c. present. Bilin further has an assimilated *-nni* for Pl.2/3. Ex. Bilin *gābax* 'he refused', *gāblā* 'he did not refuse', *gāblī* 'I did not refuse'. Awngi also has this negative-marker in the "negative subordinate" form, *desāy"la* or *desāy"lēš* 'without studying'.

The negation of the indefinite nonpast in Awngi leads to an "impoverished conjugation," *desāla* being the forms used for all of the singular, and Pl.2/3.,—only Pl.1c. has a clear form *desnāla* 'we do not study', and optionally Sg.1c. for verbs that have final devoicing (4.1.4.2.), see Hetzron 1974.

B. -g-, (cf. Awngi *ga-* negative copula), used for all the subordinate verbs in Bilin, Quara and Kemant, e.g. Bilin *gābāx* 'who refuses/refused', *gābgāx* 'who did not refuse'; Quara *wāsdō* 'so that he may hear', *wāsgānā* 'so that he may not hear'. In Bilin it is also used for the negative imperative: *gābī* 'refuse!', *gābāg* 'do not refuse!'.

C. -i-, used for all the subordinate verbs in Xamir. It may be the result of a phonetic development from -g-,<sup>53</sup> e.g. *qīdestā* 'so that he may sanctify', *qīdsīyā* 'so that he may not sanctify'. In Xamir, main verbs are negated by relative forms, thus for *wāzauk* 'he hears' and *wāzāū* 'who hears' we have *wāzāū* 'he does not hear' or 'who does not hear'. Note that for the relative, the affirmative/negative distinction seems to be based on length according to Reinisch's transcription, though the Ethiopian spelling, also given by Reinisch, rather suggests affirmative *ā* vs. negative *a* (4.1.2.). Negative relative forms are optionally followed in Xamir by a -m, thus also *wāzāūm* for 'who does not hear'. Such a -m may also be found after negated predicative adjectives: *habtām+im ayēker* 'rich+m I-am-not'. A palatal element for negation is further found in Awngi, indefinite past *desa* 'he has studied', *desaya* 'he has not studied', and imperative *dēs* 'study!', *dissē* 'don't study!'. This may come from a weakening of -la → -ya.

D. -tī- (a cognate with Sidamo), for the definite aspect and most subordinate forms in Awngi: *desāyā* 'he studies', *desātīyā* 'he does not study', *desāta* 'so that he may study', *desātita* 'so that he may not study'. One finds an element *t(a)* in the second person negative imperative of Xamir and Quara, Xamir *gab* 'talk!', *gābtā* 'don't talk!', Quara *wāsī* 'hear!', *wāstā* 'don't hear!'.

#### 4.2.3.5. DEVERBATIVE DERIVATION

##### 4.2.3.5.1. Verbs

Suffixes added directly to the stem, preceding all the other suffixes, derive verbs out of verbs. The PASSIVE is formed by means of a suffix -s- or -st- in Bilin and Quara, -š- in Xamir, -t- or -s- in Xamta, -s- in Kemant (CR), -st- in Awngi. A REFLEXIVE in -t- is found in Bilin (R), Xamir, Xamta, Quara and Kemant (CR), but there is a great deal of overlapping between passive and reflexive in these languages. The CAUSATIVE is marked by -(i)s-/-d- in Bilin, -s- in Xamta and Xamir (PB Lasta -z-), -š-/-z- in Quara and Kemant (CR, Falasha also *z* according to PB), and -c- in Awngi. Note that the causative-marker is the same in the respective languages as the first consonant of the verb 'do', Bilin (R) *es*, Xamir *sab*, Quara-Kemant *sāb*, Awngi *cew*.<sup>54</sup> There is a RECIPROCAL form marked by -stəŋ- (passive + ŋ) in Bilin (*q'aləstəŋ* 'see each other'), reduplication + š (passive) in Xamir (*eqan* 'love', *eqaneqan+š* 'love each other'), reduplication + s (passive) in Quara, and a mere ŋ in Awngi (cf. fn. 56). In the latter, it may also express gradual action, e.g. *dig+əŋ* 'to approach each other' (reciprocal) or 'to approach slowly' (gradual). There is also a CAUSATIVE OF RECIPROCAL also used as an ADJUTATIVE ('help do'), -isəŋ- (Palmer) or -iŋis- (R) in Bilin,<sup>55</sup> reciprocal + s in Xamir (*eqaneqanšes* 'cause mutual love/friendship'), -ŋc- in Awngi. Finally, one finds a FREQUENTATIVE form through the reduplication of the last radical + ŋ (Bilin *q'alələŋ* from

<sup>53</sup>In fact, this is corroborated by the appearance of a -k- in Sg.1c.—*qīdsīkā* 'so that I may not sanctify'.

<sup>54</sup>Only Xamta (*šāw*) seems to be exceptional, but the data are unreliable.

<sup>55</sup>Note the relative position of the causative marker, -s-ŋ- vs. -ŋ-s-.

*q'al-* 'see'), having also a passive *q'aləɬəŋəst-* and a causative *q'aləɬəŋəis-*; Kemant (CR) with reduplication only, *kāl* 'break', *kālkāl* 'break several objects against each other', rarely in Xamir: *day* 'touch', *dayday* 'seize' (an intensive?).

We have already seen that the derivatives may be combined, as in the reciprocal, causative of reciprocal, etc. Occasionally one may find other combinations, such as passive of causative, Xamir *bir-* 'be hot', causative *birs-* 'heat', passive of causative *birsš-* 'be heated up'. The most important phenomenon in this respect is the recursion of the causative. Several levels of causation may be marked on the verb. For Awngi, from *zurɣ* 'he returned' (intransitive), one may form a simple causative *zurcəɣ* 'he returned (transitive), gave back', a double causative *zurəccəɣ* 'he sent back', and even, though rarely, *zurəccəccəɣ* 'he made (someone) send back'. Bilin (R) also has a double causative in *-sis/-did-*, Xamir *-ses-*. Often, the double causative form is the only causative attested (there being no simple causative), but the meaning is simple causation. Some examples of verbal derivation: Xamir *kɪ+t-* 'die' (passive reflexive), *kiw-/kuw-* 'kill', *kūš-* 'make kill' (causative), *kū+t-* 'kill oneself' (active reflexive), *kūš-* 'be killed'; Awngi *tāstūnā* 'they hit', *tās+əst+ūnā* 'they were hit/beaten' (passive), *tās+əcc+ūnā* 'they made (somebody) hit' (double causative form with single causative meaning), *tās+əŋ+ūnā* 'they hit each other' (reciprocal), *tās+əŋ+c+ūnā* 'they made (people) hit each other' or 'they helped hit'; Quara *xāl-* 'see', *xāl+s-* 'be seen', *xāl+š-* 'show' (causative), *xal(a)xal+s-* 'see each other'.

Let us make here a note on DENOMINATIVE verbal derivation, using endings overlapping with the above. Bilin (R) has an intransitive-essive ending *-r-*, and a transitive *-d-*, e.g. *alib* 'spy' (noun), *alib+r-* 'be a spy', *alib+d-* 'spy out'; Xamir intransitive *-t-*, transitive *-s-*, passive *-š-*, e.g. *emquā* 'dirt', *emqū+t-* 'dirty oneself', *emqū+s-* 'to dirty', *emqū+š-* 'be dirtied'; Quara intransitive *-t-*, transitive *-š-*, passive *-s-*, e.g. *kin* 'custom', *kin+t-* 'learn, get used/accustomed to', *kin+š-* 'teach', *kin+s-* 'be taught'; Awngi intransitive-essive *-t-*, transitive *-s-*, e.g. *layēn* 'wound' (noun), *layen+t-* 'be wounded', *layen+s-* 'to wound'.

#### 4.2.3.5.2. Nominals

The infinitive has the ending *-na* in Bilin, Xamir and Kemant, *-na/ŋa* in Quara, and *-ŋ* in Awngi. The active participle endings are *-ānt-* (Bilin), *-āta* (Xamir), *-ānta* (Kemant, Quara), *-ant-* (Awngi). The *-t-* may be missing in Bilin (*-ān-*) and Awngi (*-an-*). Awngi has traces of a passive participle in *-tī*, e.g. *bəsəŋ* 'to open', *bəsantī* 'the opening one' and *bəstī* 'open' (adj.). Awngi also has an instrumental-locative noun in *-ci*, e.g. *bəscī* 'opening instrument, key' or 'place, location of opening'. The infinitive also serves as a verbal noun, though there are several other deverbative nominal formations (in *-a*, *-i*, *-āna*). Let us mention here only an infixal one, Xamir *-eC → iC*, e.g. *disəŋ* 'get used to', *-disīŋ* 'custom'.<sup>56</sup>

#### 4.2.3.6. SPECIAL VERBS

Particular attention should be given to the verb 'say', *n-* in Awngi and *y-* elsewhere. It appears also in expressive composite verbs where the first member may be an interjection, an onomatopoeic word with no independent occurrence, or a word derived from an otherwise attested root, e.g. Bilin (R) *wā<sup>c</sup> y-* 'yell', *dibb y-* 'fall', Xamir *dis y-*, Quara *dās y-*, Awngi *dēss y-* 'be happy', etc. (Plazikowsky-Brauner 1957:12-3).

The same verb plays an important rôle in another domain of the grammar. It is the only verb that may be used with direct discourse. Other verbs of enunciation have to be connected with the quoted discourse by a converb form of *y-/n-*: Xamir *wur' arni kūārtirnaū yid fayqāč* ('what you-being you-are-fighting-Masc.Rel. she-saying she-asked') 'She asked: "Why are you fighting?"',

<sup>56</sup>This may be a trace of the gradual/reciprocal ending *-ŋ-*, otherwise unattested in Xamir, cf. Awngi *des-* 'study', *desəŋ-* 'get used to'.



Awngi *dārmay namā qāšīγ'ā* ('why he-saying he asked') 'He asked: "Why?"'. Pseudo-direct discourse may be used figuratively, Awngi *ārī quttāla namā gujγ'ā* ('grain I-won't-be-thin he-saying he-refused') 'the grain would not become thin (ground)'.

COPULAS ('is') and EXISTENTIAL-LOCATIVE VERBS ('there is') in Bilin were the subject of an article by Palmer (1965). Bilin has an intricate suppletive system for the copula, the locative verb and 'have'. The most interesting phenomenon here is the REVERSAL OF ASPECT, e.g. *sānāk*, morphologically a nonpast, has the past tense meaning of 'he was' or 'there was', and conversely, *āxāk*, an apparent past tense form, is a present 'who is'. Bilin further has an invariable present tense copula *gən* (negative *āxlā*). For the past the suppletive root *sāq-* is used, and elsewhere *ak/āx*. Reinisch (1887:222-3) further indicates the existence of a root *kūn* 'be exist' (a cognate of Semitic *kwn* 'be'), used only in the past tense, mainly by old men, and women,—instead of *sāq-*. The locative verbs is *wan-* or *sāq-*, for 'have' there is *šāk-* or *kām-*, or an expression 'there is to him', e.g. *gədən ɔrgəx' + əllu* ('dog spends-the-day-exists+to-him') 'he has a dog'. Xamir may have a zero copula in the present: *an mīqā* 'I [am a] shepherd', but a repeated pronoun may be a substitute copula: *an mīqā an*, or even a neutral Sg.3m. pronoun: *an qasār ien* ('I tidy he') 'I am tidy'. Zero copula may be used with a noun as predicate only. With adjectival predicates, in the absence of a verbal copula (e.g. *ien iejir+ne habtām wīnu* ('this man+this rich was') 'This man was rich'), the subject noun has to be repeated: *ien hagīr+ne ligso hagīr* ('this town+this big town') 'This town is big'. The verb *kū* 'be' (cf. Bilin *kūn*), with past tense endings for the present, is used for 'being in a state/place', with a suppletive past *win-*: *yi zin daxnā kūč/wīncē* 'my sister well is/was (Sg.3f.)'. The "future copula" (~'become?') is based on the root *ay-*: 'To have' is *šaq-*: *biḡiq genzīb šaqūn* 'much money I-have'. Quara also has an invariable *gān* for present tense copula (neg. *ənla*), *wan-* for locative verb, *ay-* 'become', and *senbī* for the past tense copula or locative verb (*inli sänbiti* 'she was there'). 'To have' is *še*, but note the construction *il šetən wanekun* ('eye you-having you-are') 'you have eyes'. For Kemant, Sasse 1974 contains the following forms: *gagīr* 'I am' (this looks like a subjectal relative, 4.2.3.3.3.), *gagay* 'he/it is', *āgay* 'he/it is not' and *wan-* exist'. Conti Rossini further gives *gān*, the invariable present tense copula, *ay-* 'become', *sēm-* 'stay'.

There is a negative verb for 'lack' which often serves as the negative counterpart of 'have', Bilin-Xamir *bī-*, Quara-Kemant *be-*, e.g. Xamir *genzīb bauk* 'money is wanting', or in a negative form *genzīb bēker* ('money I-do-not-lack') 'I have money'.

In Awngi, the Sg.3m. present tense copula is *-i*, and zero elsewhere in the present (neg.: *ga(tīl)-*); the past tense is based on *šāi-* spend the day', and other forms on *(y)ay-* 'be(come)'. In poetry only, one finds the archaic forms *nātāna/nātānḡa/nātkāna/nātkānḡa* 'you are (m.sg./f.sg./m.pl./f.pl.)'. The locative-existential verb is *zək-*. It also expresses possession, the possessor being in the locative case: *aqī+da ɛḡn zək'a* (man+Loc. house there-is') 'The man has a house' (neg.: *əlla(γ)* 'there is not'). One can also use the verb *cay-* 'own': *aqī ɛḡn+o cayē* ('man house+Acc. he-owns') 'The man has a house'; *yas-* is 'to have/take with oneself'; *atti-* is 'lack' or 'not have'.

There are no MODAL auxiliaries in Agaw. 'Can' and 'must' are expressed by main verbs. For 'can', there is Bilin (R) *gārä+s-* or *kahal* 'be able', and *bī-* 'be unable, lack'; Xamir *čāl-* 'be able', *bī-* 'be unable'; Quara-Kemant *gār+š-* 'be able', *be-* 'be unable'; Awngi *kali-* preceded by an infinitive + dative, *ḡuna+kī ɛḡrḡi+tagi wogenəḡ+šs kalala* ('woman+and male+just-like to-choose+Dat. cannot') 'And a woman, just like a man, cannot choose'.

The forms *gVh+s/š-* are causatives of a root meaning 'strong', 'effort', *kahal/čāl/kali-* are borrowings from Semitic. For 'must' there is no information available except for Awngi: the verb *ḡayc-* 'to be necessary' (a causative of *ḡay-* 'want, look for') is impersonally used after a subjunctive.

### 4.3. Syntax

Syntax is the most neglected domain of Agaw grammar. The following presentation is highly tentative. Only what is said about Kemant and Awngi is to be accepted without reservation. Many syntactic facts have already been presented under morphology, e.g. the expression of sentence-coordination and subordination through verbal morphology (4.2.3.3.), negation (4.2.3.4.), restrictions on direct discourse (4.2.3.6.), etc.

#### 4.3.1. WORD ORDER

##### 4.3.1.1. SIMPLE SENTENCE

The typical Agaw word order is Subject-Complement-Verb:<sup>57</sup>

Bilin (R) *enā ɔɣīnā nīr madä+sī šäbb, saqarā 'ūrārī saḳäti*  
 Xamir *iūna+žän ɣīr wedäy+še šäbbe, sarā iebezeräy wince*  
 Awngi *ənnā ɣuna ɣi+w+s ənkantī+s əɣoše+stā ɣārgē dīgsayašiy"ä*

(' (B/A this-Fem.) woman(X+this-Fem.) (B/X: her, A: his/her+Masc.Gen.+Dat.) lover+  
 (B/X:Acc., A:-Dat.) milk(A:-Acc.+and) honey(A:-Acc.) (B/X she-treating-Fem.Rel. she-  
 was, A:she-presented-Predestinative-Durative)')

'This woman used to treat her lover to milk and honey'

Deviations from this word order normally still leave the verb in final position:

Bilin (R) *enā eɣīr+il laḳatā gāmān īntenux*  
 Xamir *ien ieḳir+ni+l läḳdē abīst iēterux*  
 Awngi *ənn aqī+ɣula laḳēta wuḳkā yintūnā*

('this man(X+this)+to seven lion(s) they-came')

'Seven lions came to this man'

This word order reflects the general Ethiopian tendency for a definite-indefinite order of nouns. 'THE seven lions' would probably be initial.

Exceptionally, sentences ending in elements other than the verb may be found, fairly frequently in Reinisch's Bilin material, almost never in Awngi:

Bilin (R) *bārno+lū fīū ik inkī, nī gamān+sī ča'anō, āruḳ nāū fārḱāux siḱrā+l*  
 Xamir *liqqūḳ fīrāuk iēk+et inkī, ɣi abīst+et šan, ḳūḳu ɣāy fīrḳō seḱrā+l*

('Abandoning(B+him) who-left people(X+ACC.) all, he lions+Acc. he-loading,  
 he-found they they-left-Masc.Rel. place+in')

'Having loaded the lions, he found all the people that had abandoned him in the place for which they had left'<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup>The literal translations below are "composites." Elements that do not occur in all the three languages are parenthesized and preceded by the initial letter of the language that has them.

<sup>58</sup>This illustrates several facts. The last two words are literally 'that-they-left place+in', ambiguous as to 'place that they left' or 'place for which they left' (4.3.2.3.). The clause 'he loaded the lions' is embedded in a larger clause 'he found [...] all the men who had abandoned him'.



*yädära anäli wera jārāba nehəgəz fānān*

('God from-us what wants-Rel. in-his-law if-we-go')

'What God wants from us is to follow his law'

This last sentence may be what has been called a "cataphoric" sentence (as its English gloss), with a special word-order arrangement.

Awngi has rare examples of subordinate clauses in final position, where the verb is a converb and the clause expresses the manner of the action of the main verb: *ənzēḡnā əmpālo dadô ʔmmīkamā* ('they-walked one-Acc. way-Acc. taking(pl.3.converb)') 'They walked together'.

#### 4.3.1.3. ORDER OF QUALIFIERS

In Bilin, adjectives follow the noun, (R) *gīruwā bāhar* ('man big-Masc.') 'big man', but for emphasis they may precede: *ʔawad qūrā* 'STUPID boy'. For genitival nouns and relative clauses, the word order depends on the presence or absence of the genitival agreement element -x/-ri/-w (masc./fem./pl., 4.2.1.2.2.2., 4.2.3.3.3.). If they are present, qualifiers follow the qualified; otherwise they precede: (R) *fāriḡ adārā* 'horse owner' vs. *adārā fāriḡ+ux* 'the owner of horse' for the genitive, and as for the relative: *jaʔagnā ʔāquā+l lābdīrūyū+nā* ('we-do-not-drink-Rel:a water+to you-brought+us') preposed, equivalent to *ʔāquā jaʔagnāyū+l lābdīrūyū+nā* ('water we-do-not-drink-Masc.Rel.+to you-brought+us') 'You brought us to water that we do not drink'. Palmer says that preposed, non-agreeing genitives and relatives are more frequent. Reinisch also gives examples of agreeing genitives preceding the headnoun: *bāggū fājīḡux bārāqsāyū+d bāʔal* ('lamb Easter+Masc.Gen. is-slaughtered-Masc.Rel.+in holiday') 'In the holiday in which the Easter lamb is killed'. In Xamir, adjectives and genitives always precede: *haḡ iūnā* 'stupid woman', *bīrrū+te ḡin* 'Birru's house' (non-agreeing genitive), *bīrrū+tū zin* 'Birru's brother' (agreeing genitive); relative clauses may be found before or after the headnoun: *ien kūt ʔedīl ʔaldāuk ḡīlkū+n* ('child there you-see-Masc.Rel. man this') 'this man whom you see there' (preceding) vs. *xurā kūt ʔāūs ʔeqanīr wīndrē+zān* ('child you(sg.) once you-loved was-Fem.Rel.+thisFem.') 'this girl whom once you used to love'. In Quara, one finds the adjective preceding: *yātu ḡərga* 'short time'. The example *yār ʔerwa* is you(sg.) once you-loved was-Fem.Rel.+thisFem.') 'this girl whom once you used to love'. In Quara, one finds the adjective preceding: *yātu ḡərga* 'short time'. The example *yār ʔerwa* is translated by Reinisch (1885, II.14, 128) as 'He is a good man' (lit.: 'man good-Masc.'), but most probably it is 'The man is good', cf. Reinisch's quotation from Flad (*ibid.*) *sherwayer* for 'good man' (Adj.-Noun). For the genitive: *ʔsrael xur* 'Israel's sons', *sānbāt+əz adāra* 'the Sabbath's Master', always preceding, and for a preceding relative: *wanya səbri dāya* ('you-are-Rel. place highland') 'The place you live in is highland', in Falasha of Dembia (H) *kusi ʔeay gīruēs wanterši* ('to-you I-gave-Masc.Rel. tool-Acc. return.') 'Return the tool I gave you.', but there is one example of relative clause following (H): *an yederes semāli wayanes amelekēku* ('I God-Acc. in-heaven who-is-Acc. I-worship') 'I worship God who lives in heaven'. In Kemant the order is always Qualifier-Qualified, for adjective *xāyaḡ ḡəruwa* 'big-Masc. man', relative *xalnāy xʔəra* ('we-see/saw-Masc.Rel. child') 'the boy we see/saw'. In Awngi, all qualifiers precede the qualified, *cənkūt ḡōn* 'nice house', *aḡi+w ḡōn(i)* 'the man's house', *aḡi ḡəbītəy ḡōn* ('man he-built-Masc.Rel. house') 'the house that the man built'.

Demonstratives always precede, but in Xamir they are repeated at the end of the noun phrase: *ien iūnā-zān* 'this woman+thisFem.'. Between the two demonstratives fairly long expressions (including relative clauses) may appear. When the noun phrase is in contrast with another one, only the final demonstrative is used: *ayīr+en daxnā, ʔnā ʔūsī* ('father+this well, mother ill') 'The FATHER is well, it is the mother who is ill'.

#### 4.3.2. AGREEMENT

##### 4.3.2.1. GENDER AND NUMBER AGREEMENT

Subjects impose agreement in number, gender and person on verbs. Sometimes only the verb, or other agreeing elements, show gender, Xamir *y+arāt xayō ʔrāt* ('my+bed large-Masc. bed')

'My bed is large', vs. *y+arät+zän etin nīr* ('my+bed+thisFem. small she') 'This bed of mine is small', where *arät* 'bed' does not change, and only feminine agreement expresses diminutiveness. Cf. also Awngi *nī desē* 'he studies', *nī destē* 'she studies', where the Sg.3. pronoun *nī* is not gender-marked itself. Adjectives agree in gender and number with nouns (4.2.1.3.). Genitival nouns agree with their headnouns (possessed) in number and gender in Awngi, used alternatively with a non-agreeing construction in Bilin, Xamir and Kemant (4.2.1.2.2.). Relative verbs agree in number and gender with their headnouns, alternating with a non-agreeing construction in Bilin, and always in the other languages (4.2.3.3.). Genitival and relative constructions have a great deal in common, they have the same agreement-marking morphemes.

#### 4.3.2.2. CASE IN QUALIFIER-QUALIFIED CONSTRUCTIONS

In Awngi, all qualifiers agree with the headnoun also for case: *cānkūt+da nēn+da* ('nice+Loc. house+Loc.') 'in the nice house', *aqī+w+da nēn+da* ('man+Masc.Gen.+Loc. house+Loc.') 'in the man's house', *aqī gābit+ey+da nēn+da* ('man he-built+Masc.Rel.+Loc. house+Loc.') 'in the house that the man built'. Here is an extreme example showing how a qualifier may accumulate case-markers by agreement when it appears in a multiple qualifying construction: *g'ud+a+w+sk'+da yuna+w+sk'+da cānkūt+ək'+da nēn+ək'+da wodel+kā+da ābjēl+kā+da* ('good+Fem.+Masc.Gen.+Pl.Gen.+Loc. woman+Masc.Gen.+Pl.Gen.+Loc. nice+Pl.Gen.+Loc. house+Pl.Gen.+Loc. large+Pl.+Loc. doorway +Pl.+Loc.') 'In the large doorways of the nice house of the good woman', where the locative, which refers to the whole noun phrase, appears after each word in a final position; the plural genitive, referring to the 'doorways of', is found in each word within the higher genitival phrase, preceding the locative endings; and the masculine genitive, referring to 'house of...', is assigned to each word of the lower genitival phrase. Furthermore, this example shows the agreement between adjective and noun: *gud+a yuna* 'good+Fem. woman', *cānkūt nēn* 'nice+Masc. house' and *wodel+kā ābjēl+kā* 'large+Plural doorway+Plural' (singular: *wodēl ābjēl* 'large doorway', cf. 4.1.4.3.).

Elsewhere there seems to be no such case-agreement. Palmer does mention (1958:390, 1959:158-9, 1966:203) that postposed genitives and relative verbs agree in number, gender and CASE with their headnouns in Bilin, without giving full examples. From Reinisch's data it appears that rather than agreeing, such postposed qualifiers actually carry the ONLY case-marker, as in *ti?idād adārūyū+d* ('order lord-Masc.Gen.+Dative/Locative') 'by the order of the Lord', *āquā jācgnāyū+l* ('water we-do-not-drink-Masc.Gen.+to') 'to water that we do not drink' (also expressible by *jācagnā āquā+l* ('we-do-not-drink-Rel. water+to')), *gīruwā an ar?agāux+sī* ('man I I-do-not-know+Masc.Rel.+Accusative') '...a man that I don't know' (object). Reinisch also gives an example of preposed agreeing relative verb that carries the only case-marker: *ḥājīyā+s bārāqānāyū+d uwān* ('Easter-lamb+Acc. we-slaughter-Masc.Gen.+Dative/Locative time') 'At the time when we kill the Easter lamb'. On the other hand, quite rarely, one also finds instances of double case-marking: *gīruwā+s kuwāux+si* ('man+Acc. he-killed-Masc.Rel.+Acc.') '...the man he killed' (object) *y+oyīnā nī+l gānjrā kirāyū+l lēje+lē tūnā* ('my+wife it+in she-sleeping she-spent-the-night+Masc.Rel.+to house+to to-enter') 'To enter the house in which my wife slept through the night'. On the whole, the situation in Bilin is unclear. In Xamir, the case-marker seems to be added only once, to the very end of the noun phrase, whether the headnoun is final: *k+īr+n ewāū qūrš+et* ('your+father+this he-gave-Masc.Rel. thaler+Acc.') '...the thaler that your father gave' (object), or the relative verbs is: *gīluwā an arqīyō+t* ('man I I-do-not-know-Masc.Rel.+Acc.') '...the man I do not know' (object). In Kemant, the case-marker is either attached to the headnoun: *xāyay gārūwā+s* ('big-Masc. man+Acc.'), *xalāy nēn+ās* ('I-see-Masc.Rel. house+Acc.'), or to the agreeing qualifier: *xāyay+ās gārūwā*, *xalāy+ās nēn* for the object case (-ās) of 'the big man' and 'the house that I saw' respectively. In Falasha (H), the final headnoun carries the case: *ayoy yedere+s amantenā* ('other God+Acc. do-not-believe-Pl.') 'Do not believe in another god!', *kusi leay yiruē+s wantersī* ('to-you I-gave-Masc.Rel. tool+Acc. return') 'Return the tool that I gave you', but there is one instance of double case-marking with the relative clause following the headnoun: *an yedere+s semaili wayun+es amelekēku* ('I God+Acc. in-heaven who-is+Acc. I-worship') 'I worship God who lives in heaven'.



## 4.3.2.3. THE FUNCTION OF THE HEADNOUN IN THE RELATIVE CLAUSE

The above section refers to the case expressing the function of the noun phrase containing a qualifier, in the matrix clause. The case-function of the headnoun within the relative clause, except for the distinction between subjectal and complemental relative (4.2.3.3.3.), is not indicated at all in Awngi, i.e. 'to/from/with/for/in which', etc. are not distinguished: *desāw mecaŋ* 'the book (that) I study', *desāw ŋōn* 'the house (IN) which I study', *kasāw ŋōn* 'the house (FROM or TO) which I am going', etc. Only 'whose' is expressed by a pronoun in the relative clause: *ŋāw+sa ŋōn+o kantāw aqī* ('his+Acc. house+Acc. I-see-Masc.Rel. man') 'the man whose house I see'. In Bilin, the examples (R) are contradictory: no case-marking in the relative in *mākārdānāyū+d mākārī sāna* ('you-measure-Masc.Rel.+Genitive measure like') 'according to the the measure (WITH) which you measure', but such a case is marked by a pronoun with a case-ending in *addām nī+dī gābīgrāux* ('man he+with you-did-not-talk+Masc.Rel.') 'a man with whom you never talked'. What makes the establishment of the situation on the basis of texts difficult is that most actual occurrences of relative constructions are either subjectal or objectal ('the man whom/that I saw' type) where the object case is never marked.

## 4.3.3. EMPHASIS

Information on this is available for Kemant and Awngi only. In Kemant, cleft-constructions are used, with the emphasized element in initial position, followed by a copula: *nōŋ gagay xalāy* ('house is I-see/saw+Masc.Rel.') 'It is the house that I see/saw'. In Awngi, there are three equivalent ways of emphasizing a word: (a) a particle *-γ* is attached to the element emphasized: *ān ŋōnā+da desē+γ* ('I house-Fem.+Loc. I-study+Emph') 'I do study in the small house'. If the emphasized element is other than the verb, the latter will assume the relative shape, though maintaining its final position: *ān ŋōnāda+γ desāw* ('I house-Fem.-Loc.+Emph I-study-Masc.Rel.') 'It is in the small house that I study'.<sup>60</sup> In addition to this, there are two types of cleft-constructions where the emphasized element is in the final position, preceded by a relative verb having the referential article *-kā*. The two types are: (b) one where the relative verb has a masculine ending and the emphasized element carries its case-marker: *ān desā+w+kā ŋōn+ā+da* ('I I-study+Masc.Rel.+Art. house+Fem.+Loc.') and (c) one where the relative verb agrees with the emphasized element which carries no case-marker: *ān desā+t+kā ŋōn+ā* ('I I-study+Fem.Rel.+Art. house+Fem.') 'It is (in) the small house that I study'. The three forms of emphasis are equivalent except for the fact that the verb cannot be emphasized through a cleft-construction.

## 4.3.4. QUESTION

## 4.3.4.1. SENTENCE-QUESTION

This is a question eliciting an answer 'yes' or 'no'. It is marked everywhere by a particle *-ma* attached to the scope of the question. In a neutral question, it is attached to the predicate: Kemant *wasnəγ+ma* 'Did they hear?', Xamir *kūt xamrā+t gāb argrauk+ma* ('you Xamir+Gen. tongue you-know+Q') 'Do you know Xamir?', Bilin (R) *duwīrā+ma+nā* ('he-will-say+Q+us') 'Will he tell us?'.<sup>61</sup> Awngi *katγ+a+mā* 'Did she go?'. If an element is specially

<sup>60</sup>The use of the relative form for the verb, subjectal with an emphasized subject and complemental with an emphasized complement, and the probable etymology of the emphatic particle *-γ*, from *ay* 'be', suggest that this is a broken down cleft-construction.

<sup>61</sup>Note that *ma* precedes the object suffix. Also in Kemant, it precedes the auxiliary in *əntō xāyāy anōli kagōγ+ma+wanāy* ('you-washed-Masc.Rel. sheet dried+Q+is') 'Is the sheet you have washed dry?' (Sasse, 1974).

questioned (interrogative emphasis), it will receive the *-ma*: *ienīl+mā ājir* ('here+Q I-shall-be') 'Is it here that I shall stay?'. In such cases, Awngi has the verb appear in the relative form (cf. 4.3.3. and fn. 60): *ayjā+mā katγ̃* 'yesterday+Q she-went+Masc.Rel.') 'Is it yesterday that she went?'. Optionally, in Kemant and Xamir (and possibly elsewhere) the verb of a sentence-question may assume the relative shape: Kemant *wasyār+mā* ('you-hear-Subj. Rel.+Q'), an alternative to *wasyāh+mā* ('you-hear+Q') 'Do you hear?'.

In Bilin (R), *-nī* (see 4.3.4.2.) may also appear as a question particle: *ǰān quāldūx+nī* ('elephant you-saw+Q') 'Did you see an elephant?', also in Xamir (mainly after a past tense): *ienīl wīndu+nī* ('here you-were+Q') 'Were you here?'. In some cases, both *-ma* and *-ni* appear, Bilin (R) *qyāna+dī giruwā+dī sāna+mā aydinux+nī* ('woman+and man+and like+ma you-are+ni') 'Do you live like man and wife?', Xamir *ienīl+mā wīndu+nī* ('here+ma you-were+ni') 'Were you here?'. In other cases, Xamir has *-mā* and *-ā* (see 4.3.4.2.): *gīnzib+mā ǰāyrār+ā* ('money+mā you-have-Subj. Rel.+a') 'Do you have money?'.

#### 4.3.4.2. PRONOMINAL QUESTIONS

These contain an interrogative pronoun, like *aw* 'who', or (a)w+case-ending for other expressions. In Xamir and Falasha, this may be sufficient: Xamir *wurā kūt gābru* ('what you said') 'What did you say?', Falasha (H) *aw inteoy* 'who came?'. Yet most often in these two and always elsewhere, there is a further particle: *-n(ī)* after the verb in Bilin (R), *-ā* in sentence-final position (apparently independently of whether the last word is a verb or not) in Xamir: *ien iefir+ne aū+āy+ā* ('this children+this who+Pl.+a') 'Who are these children?', *kūt aūl gūayitir+ā* ('you where you-will-settle+a') 'Where you will settle?'. Kemant has final *-ni*,<sup>62</sup> *ki+sāḡ āw+ni* ('your+name who-ni') 'What is your name'. For Quara: *aw+ni yagāna* ('who-ni my-mother') 'Who is my mother?', Falasha (H) *ki+abba aut+ni* ('your+father who-ni') 'Who is your father?', *wuferezi+ni cafiay* ('why+ni you-write') 'Why do you write?'. In Awngi, the verb is always in a relative form (4.3.3.) and a particle *-i/-y* is further used,—attached to either the verb or to the interrogative pronoun for neutral expression: *wōni katγ̃+ī* = *wōni+y katāy* 'When did she go?' (*wōni* 'when'), or to another element being emphasized, e.g. *wōni āmbiteta+y katāy* ('when she-hurrying+y she-went-Masc.Rel.') 'When did she go HURRYING?' (the question not being 'when did she go?', but 'when was her going performed in a hurry?'). If the *-y* is after the subject, the verb is a subjunctive relative: *wōni yuna+y katūt* ('when woman+ she-went-Subj. Rel.') 'When did the WOMAN go?'.

Interrogative pronouns seem to appear either in a sentence-initial position, or preceding the verb/predicate.

#### 4.3.5. PARTICLES

I am listing here elements of various functions, sharing the property of being suffixal and constituting an element outside of inflection proper. DEFINITENESS of noun phrases can be clearly expressed for the object only in Bilin and Kemant, the accusative case being reserved for definite objects (4.2.1.2.1.). Sometimes word order expresses definiteness (second set of examples in 4.3.1.1.). Otherwise, only Awngi has a REFERENTIAL ARTICLE *-hā*, used only in the strict sense of 'the afore-mentioned'. If needed, demonstratives may be used for definiteness.<sup>63</sup> Bilin has an indefinite article *la* (Palmer 1966:113) cf. fn. 41.

<sup>62</sup>In his literal translation, Halévy rendered this by a copula. Also Sasse considers it a sort of "question copula."

<sup>63</sup>Plazikowsky-Brauner (1958:135) signals the "rarely used" articles masc. *-d*, fem. *-n* for Lasta, e.g. *eferā* 'child', *eferēd* 'boy', *eferēn* 'girl'. I suspect here confusion with the demonstratives (4.2.2.2.), *-n* as close demonstrative and *-d* as remote. Possibly, when the investigation was made, there happened to be a girl nearby and a boy farther.

In Awngi, in a sentence containing an emphasis, question, or an imperative, an ADDRESSING PARTICLE with no particular function may be attached to any element (one or more) in the sentence, *-na* when talking to a man, and *-n̄ja* when talking to a woman. Example *ān desāw+na ḡnnā mecaḡawa+γ+na* ('I study-Masc.Rel.+na this-Fem. book-Fem.-Acc.+Emph.+na')<sup>64</sup> 'It is this booklet that I am studying' (further conveying the information that a man is addressed here).

For conjoining noun phrases, Awngi has *-stā* attached to the nonfinal conjunct, elsewhere juxtaposition is used. For 'both...and...', Bilin has *-di...-di* after each conjunct<sup>65</sup> Xamir *-m...-m* or *-izme...-z*, Quara *-rū...-rū*, or *-k'a* after the final conjunct only, and Awngi *-kī...-kī*. The adversative particle, for 'but', is put after the first word, or sometimes the first phrase, of the sentence. It is *-γā* or *grā* in Bilin (R), *-zā* in Quara and *-k'ci* in Awngi. Awngi also has *-lā* for 'also'. Elsewhere, and also partly in Awngi, the following particle is used to render our concept of 'also' elsewhere. A great importance is played in these languages by the TOPICALIZING PARTICLE. In a connected text, sentences may begin with the element that constitutes the link to the preceding sentences, the element that follows from, or has been mentioned in, the preceding context. Such elements are followed by the topicalizing particle, translatable sometimes by 'as to', 'as for', sometimes by 'also', sometimes no adequate rendering is possible. These particles are Bilin (R) *-r* or *-yer* (cf. fn. 48 and the text it comments on), Xamir *-iz*, Quara *-(de)rū*, Awngi *-kī*. Example in Awngi: *kisḡṇnēs tḡṇūnā. kisḡṇēkamā+kā...bukūnā* ('let-us-trade they-told-each-other. they-trading+kī...they-fled') 'They said to each other "Let us trade!". After they traded,... they fled!.'

Another element worth mentioning is the particle used for strong affirmation cooccurring with a negation of the opposite possibility, in a way the mirror-image of English 'but' in the sense of German 'sondern'. This particle follows the affirmative sentence. It is *agadā* or *gē* in Quara and *-gu* in Awngi (= Amharic *ən̄jī*). Example in Quara: *kəṛəṇjī kəṛəṇjī+dagəz adäyāla fārāsāku agāda* ('stone stone-upon does-not-remain it-is destroyed agāda') 'There will remain no stone upon stone, but it will be destroyed'.

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<sup>64</sup>Note that this is both a cleft-construction and an emphasis in *-γ*.

<sup>65</sup>There is a case-ending *-di* 'with' (comitative), cf. 4.2.1.2.1. Table 1. However, the present *-di* is compatible with other case-endings. According to Reinisch, the other case-endings follow this *-di*, whereas they precede the comparable particles in the other languages, cf. Palmer 1966:203.

<sup>66</sup>The present bibliography is more complete than any other bibliography of Agaw, but it is not absolutely complete. Because of insufficient bibliographic indications, I was unable to locate some sources the existence of which is yet certain. For instance, Halévy 1873 refers to Bilin material presented by W. Munzinger in his report to the German Geographic Society, but I was unable to find it myself.

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